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Agenda item 38
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 12 November 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I am writing to you in response to the identical letters dated 26 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative Israel addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2018/960).

Lebanon reiterates that it is profoundly concerned at the systematic campaign of allegations and repeated threats that Israel has mounted against it. The international community recognizes that Lebanon is striving to stabilize further the country by reactivating State institutions, addressing the repercussions of the influx of displaced persons from Syria, defeating the menace of terrorism that pervades the entire region and fostering the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Meanwhile, Israel presses ahead with its unilateral approach, which is counter to the international consensus, by repeating its lies about and threats against the Lebanese people, Lebanese individuals and the country's infrastructure.

This campaign culminated with the speech that the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, delivered before the General Assembly on 27 September 2018, a speech in which he made false allegations and told lies. The Permanent Representative of Israel reiterated those false allegations and lies in his identical letters dated 26 October 2018 (S/2018/960). Although those letters consist of nothing more than various fabricated allegations that are not based on facts, they are nonetheless very serious and grave if only because the author threatens Lebanon and its people and attempts to incite the international community against Lebanon. Those letters are just another in a series of threats that various Israeli officials in turn have made against Lebanon. In that connection, I should like to draw attention, for example, to the words of the Minister of Culture of the Israeli Government, Naftali Bennett, who threatened to send Lebanon back to the Middle Ages and said that Lebanese institutions and infrastructure, the airport, power stations, road junctions and Lebanese Army barracks would be considered legitimate targets. At the time those statements were made, Lebanon called upon the Security Council to address the matter with the seriousness required, and it now reiterates its calls upon the Council,

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which is entrusted with upholding the Charter of the United Nations. Such threats clearly violate paragraph 4 of Article II of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides that all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon has always been transparent in its dealings and with respect to establishing facts. Accordingly, the Ministry organized a field tour of the three locations around Beirut International Airport at which Netanyahu claimed there are missiles. All accredited ambassadors to Lebanon were invited to take part, and the representatives of 73 States participated. Those who took part in the field tour witnessed the reality on the ground and they understood that the Israeli allegations are false.

Lebanon categorically rejects the efforts of Israel to sow terror and target one the pillars of the Lebanese economy by attempting to tarnish the image of Beirut International Airport and to frighten foreign States and their nationals, in order to stop them from travelling to Lebanon. That course of action constitutes an economic war whose effects are no less serious than the destructive effects of Israel's repeated attacks on Lebanon, the most recent of which was the war that Israel waged in 2006. It should be noted that Israel launched the first of its aggression against Lebanon decades ago when it specifically targeted Beirut airport in 1968, destroying 13 civilian aircraft.

Indeed, not even Lebanese sport and the contributions that it has made to achieving sustainable development are spared by Israel, which levels allegations against Al-Ahed Sports Club and its corporate sponsors. Founded in 1966, it is one of the oldest sports clubs in Lebanon. The club is the current champion of Lebanese football and represents it in the Asian Football Confederation Cup.

Lebanon fears that these attacks against Lebanese sport and the economy are an attempt by Israel to secure prior absolution for future attacks.

Meanwhile, Israel continues to covet oil deposits that are in Lebanese territorial waters. From the time that oil exploration contracts were granted, Israel has intensified its efforts to seize some of those deposits and create a climate of anxiety and fear by threatening to attack Lebanon. Israel continues to refuse to pay the $856.4 million in compensation that it owes to Lebanon for the damage that Israel caused when it bombed the civilian electric power plant in Jiyeh, causing an oil slick that covered the shores of Lebanon. That amount has been reaffirmed by the General Assembly in a series of resolutions, the most recent of which was resolution 72/209 of 20 December 2017.

It should be noted that, as in his previous in letters, the representative of Israel makes no statement that his country has been fulfilling its obligations under the relevant international resolutions. The letters from the representative of Israel also reflect an incomplete and fragmented reading of the twenty-eighth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), because no mention is made paragraph 38 of the report. In that paragraph, the Secretary-General clearly states: "I condemn all violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon." Such violations undermine the credibility of the Lebanese security services and generate anxiety among the civilian population. I therefore renew my calls upon Israel to fulfil its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and withdraw its forces from the northern part of the village of Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line, as well as to cease immediately its overflights of Lebanese airspace. These daily Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty by land, sea and air have been documented in dozens of letters of complaint addressed to the Security Council.

In view of the foregoing, Lebanon holds Israel responsible for any measure that might undermine the stability of Lebanon and the region. It also stresses that it is high time for the Security Council to speak forcefully. The Council must reject such attempts by Israel and strive to put an immediate end to them. Moreover, it must stop Israel from continuing to excuse itself from its obligations under international law and binding international resolutions. Israel must be compelled to take responsibility for its wrongful actions and implement the relevant international resolutions. It must also be stopped from using the pretext of "self-defence" to launch devastating wars that have and continue to cause suffering for the peoples of the region, not least the people of Lebanon.

Lebanon requests the Security Council to take the measures required to deter Israel from continuing to commit serious violations of the sovereignty of Lebanon and to threaten the security of Lebanon and the safety of its people.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 38, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bachir Saleh **Azzam**
Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2018/1019

Security Council

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14 November 2018

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Credentials of the alternate representative of Côte d'Ivoire on the Security Council

Report of the Secretary-General

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 14 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations stating that Mr. Tiémoko Moriko has been appointed alternate representative of Côte d'Ivoire on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

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United Nations S/2018/1020

Security Council

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16 November 2018
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Identical letters dated 13 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the following information:

The illegitimate international coalition led by the United States of America has continued to commit crimes against Syrian civilians in various parts of Syria. Most recently, on 12 November 2018, aircraft of the so-called coalition bombarded the village of Sha'fah and other towns and villages in the Dayr al-Zawr countryside, killing or wounding 60 civilians. Hundreds of civilians were displaced after their homes were destroyed.

In previous letters, the Syrian Arab Republic noted that the criminal coalition's aggressions and barbaric attacks against innocent civilians had taken on a deliberate and sustained character and that the coalition had used various types of internationally prohibited weapons that had indiscriminate effects or were capable of causing mass destruction, such as white phosphorus bombs. It asked the Security Council to act immediately to halt those crimes and prevent their recurrence.

The crime committed by the illegitimate United States-led coalition in the village of Sha'fah, not to mention the massacres that preceded it, point to the total collapse of the complex of values and ethical principles that the United Nations has undertaken to respect and foster since consensus was first reached on the Organization's establishment. This situation has arisen because the United States and its allies have shown utter disregard for those values and principles. These crimes also put on display the extent of this deplorable coalition's contempt for civilian lives and the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law. This horrific crime confirms the points made by the Syrian Arab Republic in its previous letters, most recently in the identical letters dated 10 November 2018 (S/2018/1009); they give the lie to the claims of the United States that its goal is to combat the armed terrorist groups. It is now unequivocally clear that these criminal acts of aggression are intended to kill as many Syrians as possible; prolong the Syrian crisis; further damage the infrastructure; undermine the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic; and obstruct any future solution to the Syrian crisis. Such a course of action is flagrantly inconsistent with all of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council concerning the crisis in Syria.

The Syrian Arab Republic once again calls upon the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility by taking earnest and immediate action to prevent such attacks and

massacres and the systematic destruction of infrastructure in Syria. The Council must take the necessary steps to create an independent and impartial international mechanism to investigate and condemn those crimes and punish the perpetrators. It must ensure that the States of the coalition comply with the Charter of the United Nations, in which crimes of aggression, interference in the internal affairs of States and undermining the territorial integrity of Member States are rejected. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that, if the Council remains silent about these crimes and their perpetrators, it will only encourage the aggressor States to continue murdering and displacing Syrian civilians and destroying their property. The Security Council and the General Assembly will then be completely unable to fulfil any of the responsibilities entrusted to the United Nations and its main organs under the Charter.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/1021

Security Council

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United States of America: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions and its presidential statements on the situation in Sudan and South Sudan, and in particular, resolutions 1990 (2011), 2024 (2011), 2032 (2011), 2046 (2012), 2047 (2012), 2075 (2012), 2104 (2013), 2126 (2013), 2156 (2014), 2179 (2014), 2205 (2015), 2230 (2015), 2251 (2015), 2287 (2016), 2318 (2016), 2352 (2017), 2386 (2017), 2411 (2018), 2412 (2018), 2416 (2018), and 2438 (2018) as well as presidential statements S/PRST/2012/19 and S/PRST/2013/14, and the Council's press statements of 18 June 2012, 21 September 2012, 28 September 2012, 6 May 2013, 14 June 2013, 14 February 2014, 17 March 2014, 11 December 2014, and 27 November 2015,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Sudan and South Sudan, and to the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and recalling the importance of the principles of good neighbourliness, non-interference and regional cooperation,

Reiterating that the territorial boundaries of States shall not be altered by force, and that any territorial disputes shall be settled exclusively by peaceful means, *affirming* the priority it attaches to the full and urgent implementation of all outstanding issues from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and *underscoring* that the future status of Abyei shall be resolved by negotiations between the parties in a manner consistent with the CPA and not by the unilateral actions of either party,

Underscoring that continued cooperation between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and Government of the Republic of South Sudan is critical for peace, security and stability and the future relations between them, *encouraging* progress on improving bilateral relations and holding regular meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) and other joint mechanisms, and *calling on* both governments to implement their commitments in the 20 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, the 29 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan on Border Security and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM), the 30 July 2011 Agreement on the Border Monitoring Support Mission between the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, the 27 September 2012 Agreements on Cooperation and Security Arrangements, and all subsequent decisions of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM),

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Commending the continued assistance provided to the parties by the African Union (AU), the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan and South Sudan, whose responsibilities will be taken over by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA),

Acknowledging that over the course of the seven years since establishment of UNISFA, the mission has been able to stabilize and demilitarize the Abyei Area and that UNISFA is now an interim security force with no viable exit strategy, and in this regard, *taking note* of the need to reconfigure the mission in order to create the space for a viable political process that would also serve as an exit strategy,

Noting that over the course of seven years the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan have not made meaningful progress on the political process outlined in the 2011 and 2012 agreements listed above, including the failure to hold regular meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and to establish the Abyei Area Administration, and the Abyei Police Service,

Emphasizing the change in threat in the Abyei Area as characterized by the 30 August 2018 Secretary-General's letter (S/2018/778), and *taking note* of the security situation in the Abyei Area as characterized by the 15 October 2018 Secretary-General's report (S/2018/923),

Commending the UN Police for activities to advise and mentor the local population in absence of the Abyei Police Service, *urging* both parties to establish the Abyei Police Service, *welcoming* UNISFA's enhanced role in fostering intercommunal dialogue, and *urging* all parties to continue these dialogues,

Commending the efforts of UNISFA in effectively carrying out its mandate, including by its ongoing facilitation of peaceful migration throughout the Abyei Area, conflict prevention, mediation and deterrence, and *strongly underscoring* the unacceptability of any attack on United Nations personnel, and *reiterating* that such attacks, which may constitute a war crime, should be swiftly and thoroughly investigated, and that those responsible should be held to account,

Recalling that the Security Council welcomed in resolution 2205 (2015) the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian head of mission,

Bearing in mind that people in the Abyei Area continue to rely on humanitarian assistance, that access for humanitarian organizations to reach people in need remains of crucial importance, and that humanitarian actors continue to provide assistance to 181,600 people in the Abyei Area,

Recalling resolution 2378 (2017) and its request of the Secretary-General to ensure that data related to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, including peacekeeping performance data, is used to improve analytics and the evaluation of mission operations, based on clear and well identified benchmarks, and *further recalling* resolution 2436 (2018) and its request of the Secretary-General to ensure that decisions to recognize and incentivize outstanding performance and decisions regarding deployment, remediation, training, withholding of financial reimbursement, and repatriation of uniformed or dismissal of civilian personnel, are predicated on objective performance data,

Further recalling resolutions 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace, and security and emphasizing that persistent barriers to full implementation of these resolutions will only be dismantled through dedicated commitment to women's empowerment, participation, and human rights, and through

concerted leadership, consistent information and action, and support, to build women's engagement in all levels of decision-making, also recalling resolution 2242 and its aspiration to increase the number of women in military and police contingents of United Nations peacekeeping operations,

Expressing concern about the residual threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war in the Abyei Area, which hinders the safe return of displaced persons to their homes, safe migration, and livelihood activities,

Recognizing that the current situation in Abyei and along the border between Sudan and South Sudan continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security,

1. *Decides* to extend until 15 May 2019 the mandate of UNISFA as set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 1990 (2011) and acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, *further decides* to extend until 15 May 2019 the tasks of UNISFA as set out in paragraph 3 of resolution 1990 (2011);

2. *Recalls* its decision in resolution 2412 (2018) to extend until 15 April 2019 UNISFA's mandate modification set forth in resolution 2024 (2011) and paragraph 1 of resolution 2075 (2012), *further recalls* its decision in resolution 2438 (2018) that such extension shall be the final extension of support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) unless both parties demonstrate measurable progress as outlined in paragraph 3 of resolution 2438 (2018), and *calls on* the parties to take those steps;

3. *Decides* to reduce the authorized troop ceiling to 4,140 until 15 May 2019, and *further decides* to reduce the troop ceiling by 295 troops following the commencement of the deployment of increased police personnel as set forth in paragraph 4, and *also decides* that as of 15 April 2019, the authorized troop ceiling shall decrease by a further 557 troops, unless it decides to extend the mandate modification set forth in resolution 2024 (2011) and paragraph 1 of resolution 2075 (2012), in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 2438 (2018);

4. *Decides* to increase the authorized police ceiling established in resolution 1990 (2011) to 345 police personnel, including 185 individual police officers and one formed police unit, *requests* the United Nations to take necessary steps to expeditiously deploy additional police in order to meet the new authorized police ceiling of 345, *demands* that the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan provide full support to UNISFA in the deployment of these personnel, including by promptly issuing visas, and *expresses* its intention to reduce the authorized police ceiling as the Abyei Police Service is gradually established and effectively providing rule of law throughout the Abyei area;

5. *Expresses* its intention to request the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian Deputy Head of Mission for UNISFA to support steps to implement the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of Abyei Area and to achieve a political resolution to the status of Abyei, unless the Parties make progress towards a political solution,

6. *Expresses* its intention to continue revising as appropriate the configuration and mandate of UNISFA in light of recommendations from the Secretary General, including recommendations contained in the 22 April 2018 and 20 August 2018 letters, and based on progress towards implementation of the Cooperation Agreements of 27 September 2012 and settlement of the final status of Abyei in a manner consistent with the CPA;

7. *Expresses* disappointment that the parties have taken few steps to implement the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and

Security of Abyei Area and to achieve a political resolution to the status of Abyei, and *requests* the parties update the AUHIP and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa on the steps outlined below and invites the AUHIP and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to update it by 15 April 2019 on the steps taken towards the following:

1. Resolution of the final status of Abyei to include steps towards considering the 2012 proposal made by AUHIP, noting, in particular the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) Communiques of 24 October 2012, 26 October 2013 and 6 February 2018,

2. Implementation of all Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) decisions, in accordance with the Agreement on Temporary Administrative and Security Arrangements for the Abyei Area of June 2011,

3. Steps the AU Commission has taken to submit to the AUPSC the findings and recommendations of the Abyei Area Joint Investigation and Inquiry Committee as requested by the AUPSC in its Communique of 31 July 2015, and steps taken to promote reconciliation and engagement of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities;

8. *Urges* continued progress toward the establishment of the Abyei Area interim institutions, in accordance with the Agreement on Temporary Administrative and Security Arrangements for the Abyei Area of June 2011, *takes note*, in particular, that in the absence of an Abyei Police Service, UNISFA continues to be the only entity to provide policing services in response to matters of law and order, *further takes note* of the mapping exercise from 30 November 2017 to 2 February 2018 by UN Police in conjunction with UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes and traditional leaders of both communities for the eventual establishment of an Abyei Police Service, *recognizes* the appointment of relevant officials by the two governments to participate in a joint integrated planning exercise and development of a roadmap towards establishment of the Abyei Police Service, and *urges* the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to participate in such an exercise by 15 April 2019;

9. *Encourages* the AUHIP and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to continue coordinating efforts to facilitate full implementation of the 2011 agreements, and *further encourages* UNISFA to coordinate with the AUHIP and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on reconciliation, community sensitization, and political peace processes;

10. *Welcomes* renewed efforts to determine conclusively the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) centreline on the ground, and *reiterates* that the centreline of the SDBZ in no way prejudices the current or future legal status of the border, ongoing negotiations on the disputed and claimed areas, and demarcation of the borders;

11. *Underscores* that UNISFA's protection of civilians mandate as set out in paragraph 3 of resolution 1990 (2011) includes taking the necessary actions to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source of such violence, and in that regard *underlines* that peacekeepers are authorized to use all necessary means, which includes the use of force when required, in order to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, in accordance with mission mandates, the United Nations Charter and other applicable international law, and *stresses* the importance of continued and further engagement by senior mission leadership, with a view to ensuring that all mission components and all levels of the chain of command are properly informed of, trained for, and involved in the mission's protection of civilians mandate and their relevant responsibilities; and *commending* UNISFA's efforts in that regard;

12. *Condemns* the intermittent presence of South Sudan security service personnel and the deployment of Diffra Oil Police units in the Abyei Area, in violation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, as well as any entry of armed militias into the territory, and *reiterates* its demands that immediately and without preconditions the Government of South Sudan fully redeploy its security service personnel from the Abyei Area and that the Government of Sudan redeploy the Oil Police in Diffra from the Abyei Area, and *further reiterates*, in accordance with relevant resolutions, in particular resolution 1990 (2011) and resolution 2046 (2012), that the Abyei Area shall be demilitarized from any forces, as well as armed elements of the local communities, other than UNISFA and the Abyei Police Service;

13. *Urges* the two governments to take all necessary steps to ensure that Abyei is effectively demilitarized, including through disarmament programs as necessary;

14. *Reaffirms* that UNISFA may undertake weapons confiscation and destruction in the Abyei Area as authorized under resolution 1990 (2011), consistent with its mandate and within its existing capabilities, in coordination with the signatories of the June 2011 Agreement on the Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, the AJOC, and the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities and consistent with the previous AJOC decision to establish the Area as a "weapons free area";

15. *Requests* UNISFA to continue its dialogue with the AJOC and with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities on effective strategies and oversight mechanisms for ensuring full compliance by all relevant parties with Abyei's status as a weapons-free area, and *calls upon* the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, the AJOC, and the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to extend full cooperation to UNISFA in this regard;

16. *Welcomes* UNISFA initiatives, to support community dialogue and efforts by the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, such as peace committees, to strengthen inter-communal relationships and facilitate stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area, and *invites* UNISFA to coordinate with the Juba-appointed administration in Abyei and the Misseriya administration in Muglad, using appropriate civilian expertise, to maintain stability, foster intercommunal reconciliation, and facilitate the return of displaced persons to their village and the delivery of services;

17. *Urges* the two Governments immediately to take steps to implement confidence-building measures among the respective communities in the Abyei Area, ensuring women are involved at all stages, including through reconciliation processes at the grass-roots level as well as through support for the ongoing efforts of non-governmental organizations engaging in peacebuilding, and by fully supporting UNISFA's efforts in promoting community dialogue;

18. *Underscores* that women's participation at all levels of inter-community dialogue is critical to ensure a credible, and legitimate process and *calls upon* all parties to promote full and equal participation of women;

19. *Welcomes* UNISFA's continued efforts, within existing capabilities and resources, and in close coordination with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, to strengthen the capacities of Community Protection Committees in order to assist with management of law and order processes in Abyei, while ensuring the humane and dignified treatment of suspects and other detainees, and to continue engaging with both governments on this issue;

20. *Welcomes* the 14 November 2017 meeting of traditional leaders of Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities, *calls upon* all parties to cooperate fully with the findings and recommendations following the Abyei Area Joint Investigation and

Inquiry Committee's investigation into the killing of a UNISFA peacekeeper and the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief, following the release of findings by the AU Commission, *welcomes* the 24 March 2015 AUPSC press statement requesting the AU Commission to engage the parties on the findings and recommendations, and looks forward to the release of the African Union Commission's report on the killing of the Ngok Dinka chief, as agreed to by the traditional leaders, and for the report to be used as a basis for reconciliation between the communities, bearing in mind the need to promote stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area;

21. *Calls upon* all Member States, in particular Sudan and South Sudan, to ensure the free, unhindered and expeditious movement, to and from Abyei and throughout the SDBZ, of all personnel, as well as equipment, provisions, supplies and other goods, including vehicles, aircraft, and spare parts, which are for the exclusive and official use of UNISFA;

22. *Renews* its call upon the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to provide full support to the United Nations, including by promptly issuing visas to military, police and civilian United Nations personnel, including humanitarian personnel, without prejudice to their nationality, for entry into Sudan and South Sudan, facilitating basing arrangements, infrastructure construction, including the Athony airport, in the Mission Area and flight clearances, and providing logistical support, *calls upon* the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to facilitate travel from within Sudan and South Sudan to and from Abyei, and *further calls upon* all parties to fully adhere to their obligations under the Status of Forces Agreements;

23. *Recognizes* that the absence of development projects and the inability to deliver basic government services has had an adverse effect on Abyei populations, *calls upon* the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, as well as donors to support road maintenance, general reconstruction, and capacity-building, and *welcomes* the call in the Secretary-General's letter (S/2018/778) for development projects that focus on reconciliation;

24. *Demands* that the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan continue to facilitate the deployment of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to ensure freedom of movement, as well as the identification and clearance of mines in the Abyei Area and SDBZ;

25. *Further demands* that all parties involved allow all humanitarian personnel full, safe and unhindered access to civilians in need of assistance and all necessary facilities for their operations, in accordance with international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, and United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance;

26. *Strongly urges* that all parties cease all forms of violence, human rights violations and abuses, violations of international humanitarian law, and, in particular violations and abuses of applicable international law committed against women and children;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that effective human rights monitoring is carried out, including of any sexual and gender-based violence and violations and abuses of human rights, including those committed against women and children, and *reiterates* its call upon the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to extend their full cooperation to the Secretary-General to this end, including by issuing visas to the concerned United Nations personnel;

28. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek to increase the number of women in UNISFA, as well as to ensure the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations;

29. *Welcomes* UNISFA's progress identifying a Women and Child Protection Advisor and *calls* on the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to promptly issue a visa for the advisor and facilitate travel within Sudan and South Sudan to and from Abyei and throughout the SDBZ;

30. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken by the Secretary General to standardize a culture of performance in UN peacekeeping, and *reaffirms* its support for the development of a comprehensive and integrated performance policy framework that identifies clear standards of performance for evaluating all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel working in and supporting peacekeeping operations that facilitates effective and full implementation of mandates, and includes comprehensive and objective methodologies based on clear and well defined benchmarks to ensure accountability for underperformance and incentives and recognition for outstanding performance, and *calls* on him to apply it to UNISFA;

31. *Recalls* its Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/22 and its resolution 2272 (2016) and *requests* the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to ensure full compliance of UNISFA with the United Nations zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to ensure that all personnel of the mission are vetted for history of sexual misconduct in the service with the United Nations and to keep it informed through his reports about UNISFA's progress in this regard, and *urges* troop and police-contributing countries to take appropriate preventative action including pre-deployment awareness training, and to promote full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;

32. *Notes* the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure close cooperation among United Nations missions in the region, including UNISFA, the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), as well as his Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, and requests that he continue this practice including with the Special Envoy for the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa;

Reporting

33. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to inform it of progress in implementing UNISFA's mandate, in one written report, no later than 15 April 2019 and include reporting on:

- the progress in reduction of troops and increase in police per paragraphs 3 and 4,
- the potential for an augmented civilian component in UNISFA to support the political process per paragraph 5,
- the movement of weapons into Abyei and the presence, destruction and confiscation of weapons within Abyei per paragraph 14,
- the steps that have been taken in line with paragraphs 28 and 30,
- results of human rights monitoring as requested in paragraph 27, including information, analysis, and data on violations and abuses of human rights,
- steps which the parties have taken per paragraphs 7 and 8;
- recommendations on revisions to UNISFA's configuration and mandate, based on consultation with all relevant stakeholders in order to create the space for a viable political process that would serve as an exit strategy;
- a summary of actions taken to improve mission performance and address performance challenges including lapses in leadership, national caveats that

negatively affect mandate implementation effectiveness, and demanding operational environments;

34. *Requests* the Secretary-General to inform it of progress in implementing UNISFA's mandate, in a note, no later than 31 January 2019 and report on the progress in reduction of troops and increase in police per paragraphs 3 and 4,

35. *Decides* to remain actively seized of this matter.

United Nations S/2018/1022

Security Council

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15 November 2018

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Letter dated 13 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With regard to the letter dated 23 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq, Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom (see S/2018/927), I would like to draw your attention to the following.

For over three decades, some parts of the Iraqi territory have been a safe haven for terrorist organizations, including PKK, DEASH and Al Qaeda.

Since then, terrorists have used Iraqi land to recruit and train militants, generate financial resources and launch systematic cross-border attacks on Turkey.

They have caused a devastating humanitarian impact on Iraq, as well as on neighbouring countries.

As enshrined in relevant Security Council resolutions, it is the responsibility of Member States to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and to deny terrorist groups the ability to use their territory as a safe haven.

As such, and in accordance with Security Council resolutions and the Iraqi constitution, the Government of Iraq must eliminate PKK and other terrorist organizations' presence and operation within its borders. This is the only way in which Iraq can establish and exercise its sovereignty fully over its territory.

It is against this background that Turkey exercises its inherent right of self-defence, as outlined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, and takes appropriate measures within the context of the responsibility attributed to it by relevant Security Council resolutions in the fight against terrorism. Any measure taken by Turkey in this effort is in compliance with all the obligations under international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

Turkey will continue to take all the necessary steps in accordance with international law to protect its people from terrorist threats and attacks. Turkey expects the new Government of Iraq to expand and strengthen its fight against terrorism.

As a staunch supporter of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, Turkey will continue to stand by the Iraqi Government as it intensifies its measures to prevent and suppress terrorist acts and eliminate the terrorist presence in its territory.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

18-19518 (E) 191118

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United Nations A/73/565–S/2018/1023

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
16 November 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Agenda item 45
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 14 November 2018 from the Chargée d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I transmit herewith two documents detailing the violations of the national airspace of Cyprus, the infringements of international air traffic regulations in the flight information region of Cyprus (see annex I) and the illegal use of closed ports and airports in Cyprus, by Turkey, during the month of August 2018 (see annex II).

This persistent policy of violating international law and breaching international rules and regulations is a constant threat to international peace and security, has a negative impact on regional stability, jeopardizes the safety of international civil aviation, creates difficulties for air traffic over Cyprus and prevents the creation of an enabling environment in which to conduct the Cyprus peace process.

Turkey continues to systematically harass civilian and military aircrafts within the Nicosia flight information region via radio calls while, during the same period, the regime installed by the occupying power in the area of Cyprus that it occupies, has illegally issued one Notice to Airmen relating to exercises conducted by the Turkish Air Force. Additionally, Turkish commercial aircraft systematically use the Tympou airport, which continues to operate illegally following the closure, by the Cyprus Government, of all ports of entry in the areas where it does not exercise effective control.

The said actions of Turkey, which has continued to occupy the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus since 1974, are clearly aimed at undermining the sovereignty of Cyprus, consolidating the ongoing de facto division and upgrading the secessionist entity's status by claiming a purported airspace over the occupied territory of the Republic. In this respect, I would like to underline that there is only one Cypriot State, which is the Republic of Cyprus, as stipulated also in various Security Council resolutions (in particular resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)), in which the Council declared legally invalid the purported secession of part of Cyprus.

On behalf of my Government, I strongly protest the continuing violations of the national airspace and territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey, as well

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as the infringements by the latter of international air traffic regulations, and appeal for their immediate cessation.

The Republic of Cyprus reiterates, in this respect, its call for all States to respect Security Council resolutions and adhere to the principles of sovereignty and non-interference enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Finally, I would like to urge Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community to contribute to a meaningful resumption of the peace process, instead of focusing on undermining the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus and promoting the partition of Cyprus through the creation of facts on the ground and the formalization of the status quo, including by seeking to politically upgrade the secessionist entity.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annexes as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 45, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Polly **Ioannou**
Chargée d'affaires a.i.

Annex I to the letter dated 14 November 2018 from the Chargée d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Airborne violations

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
1 August	1258–1352	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia flight information region (FIR) and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia area control centre (ACC)
	1600–1625	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1245–1325	One B-350 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
2 August	0836–0931	One B-350 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	0930–1017	One AS-532 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1047–1217	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1323–1505	One AB-412 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1939–2155	Two Turkish military helicopters infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
6 August	1002–1253	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
7 August	1045–1252	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
8 August	0755–0850	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	0919–1420	Two Cougar Turkish military helicopters infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1132–1151	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1525–1624	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1656–1713	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
9 August	1017–1118	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1330–1444	One Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
12 August	1700–1750	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
13 August	0926–1321	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1026–1042	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1845–1915	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
14 August	0556–0911	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1820–1854	One B-350 Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
15 August	0600–0910	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	0958–1015	One A-340 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1622–1924	One Cougar and one Huey Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	2202–2218	One A-340 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
16 August	0607–0844	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	0950–1102	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	0955–1150	One King Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1602–1712	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1639–1705	Two F-16 and two F-4 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1742–1900	Two Turkish military helicopters infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
17 August	0957–1052	One B-350 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1755–1811	CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
19 August	0840–0926	One King Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
26 August	0950–1059	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1010–1032	Two Cougar Turkish military helicopters infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
28 August	0952–1120	One Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1350–1615	One Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1443–1603	One Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1902–1950	One B-350 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
29 August	1049–1251	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1102–1123	One B-200 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1441–1536	One Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1601–1615	One B-200 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1735–1845	Four Turkish military helicopters infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1757–1845	One Huey Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
30 August	1015–1144	Five Turkish military helicopters infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1158–1355	One B-350 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1800–1913	Two Cougar Turkish military helicopters infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
31 August	1027–1243	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1053–1304	One B-350 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC

Annex II to the letter dated 14 November 2018 from the Chargée d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General

Naval violations

Date	*Nature of violation*
1 August	One F-512 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
1–7 August	One P-336 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
4–7 August	One F-512 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
8–9 August	One F-512 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
9–11 August	One P-334 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
10–14 August	One P-334 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
11–15 August	One F-512 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
15–16 August	One P-336 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
17–18 August	One F-512 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
17–18 August	One P-336 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
18 August	One P-334 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
20–27 August	One P-336 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces

Date	*Nature of violation*
25–28 August	One F-490 Turkish vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
25–29 August	One A-1600 Turkish vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta
30–31 August	One P-338 Turkish vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces

United Nations S/2018/1024

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 13 November 2018 from the representatives of Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Germany, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, South Africa and Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We, the 10 current elected members of the Security Council and the five incoming elected members of the Security Council — Belgium, Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Germany, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden and South Africa — have been elected with large margins by the General Assembly and, as such, bring added legitimacy to the Security Council. We are committed to taking this responsibility seriously, including in the conduct of our chairmanships of the Council's subsidiary bodies.

Currently, the incoming members are consulting with members of the Security Council on the distribution of the chairmanships of the subsidiary bodies for the coming year. In his note S/2017/507, the President of the Security Council stated that the consultation process for the selection of the Chairs should take place in a "balanced, transparent, efficient and inclusive way". We extend our gratitude to Kuwait, as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and the United States, as coordinator of the five permanent members, for having conducted the consultation process on behalf of the Council in line with and in the spirit of note S/2017/507.

The 10 current elected members and the five incoming elected members have consistently emphasized the need for fair burden-sharing and an equal distribution of work among all members of the Security Council, including its permanent members. This principle should apply to the distribution of the chairmanships of the subsidiary bodies of the Council where, as a general rule, no member should chair more than two subsidiary bodies, as well as to the so-called "penholderships". The call for a more equal distribution of work is not new and has been persistently brought forward by members and non-members of the Security Council, including at the open debate on working methods of the Security Council presided over by Kuwait, in February 2018. It has also been a recurrent topic of discussion in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We strongly believe that a more equal distribution of work among all members is not just a matter of fair burden-sharing, but that it will also positively affect the overall effectiveness of the Council.

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Furthermore, the Security Council should make better use of the expertise that the Chairs of sanctions committees develop on the situations discussed in their respective committees, and should consider promoting their role as penholders and the automaticity of their role as co-penholders on the related dossiers, should they so choose. We see merit in a discussion among members of the Council, if possible, at the level of the permanent representatives, to consider this and other possibilities in order to ensure a more balanced and fair distribution of work among all members.

Guided by the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, we remain fully committed to promoting the Security Council as a body that serves the entire United Nations membership.

We have the honour to request the circulation of the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marc **Pecsteen de Buytswerve**
Permanent Representative of Belgium

(*Signed*) Sacha Sergio **Llorentty Solíz**
Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

(*Signed*) Kacou Houadja Léon **Adom**
Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire

(*Signed*) José Singer **Weisinger**
Representative of the Dominican Republic

(*Signed*) Anatolio **Ndong Mba**
Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea

(*Signed*) Taye Atskeselassie **Amde**
Permanent Representative of Ethiopia

(*Signed*) Christoph **Heusgen**
Permanent Representative of Germany

(*Signed*) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
Permanent Representative of Indonesia

(*Signed*) Kairat **Umarov**
Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan

(*Signed*) Mansour **Alotaibi**
Permanent Representative of Kuwait

(*Signed*) Karel Jan Gustaaf **van Oosterom**
Permanent Representative of the Netherlands

(*Signed*) Gustavo **Meza-Cuadra**
Permanent Representative of Peru

(*Signed*) Joanna **Wronecka**
Permanent Representative of Poland

(*Signed*) Jerry Matthews **Matjila**
Permanent Representative of South Africa

(*Signed*) Olof **Skoog**
Permanent Representative of Sweden

United Nations S/2018/1025

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2018

Original: English

France: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions and statements on the Central African Republic (CAR), in particular resolutions 2121 (2013), 2127 (2013), 2134 (2014), 2149 (2014), 2181 (2014), 2196 (2015), 2212 (2015), 2217 (2015), 2262 (2016), 2264 (2016), 2281 (2016), 2301 (2016), 2339 (2017), 2387 (2017), 2399 (2018), as well as resolution 2272 (2016), and its Presidential Statements S/PRST/2014/28 of 18 December 2014, S/PRST/2015/17 of 20 October 2015, S/PRST/2016/17 of 16 November 2016, S/PRST/2017/5 of 4 April 2017, S/PRST/2017/9 of 13 July 2017 and S/PRST/2018/14 of 13 July 2018,

Taking note of the Report of the Secretary-General of 15 October 2018 (S/2018/922) which builds on the findings and recommendations of the independent strategic review of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) conducted in June-September 2018,

Determining that the situation in the Central African Republic continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Decides* to extend until 15 December 2018 the mandate of MINUSCA as set out in resolution 2387 (2017);

2. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

18-19492 (E) 161118

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United Nations S/2018/1026

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 14 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I would like to inform you that the Economic Committee in the Republic of Yemen decided on 11 November 2018 to indefinitely suspend the application of Decree 75 on the new mechanism for pre-reimbursement for the issuance of documentary credit for raising the letter of credit in United States dollars for the import of basic commodities (wheat, rice, sugar, milk and cooking oil).

This decision came at the request of the Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry aimed at facilitating the supply of basic commodities in all governorates to return to the normal level. Moreover, the Economic Committee confirmed that it will continue to provide services and banking facilities to traders of commodities through the Central Bank of Yemen in Aden, with the fixed price set by the Bank.

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated to all members of the Security Council and have it issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Ahmed Awad **Binmubarak**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

18-19495 (E) 161118

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United Nations S/2018/1027

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 14 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for 13 and 14 November 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

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Annex to the letter dated 14 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (13 November 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire: three in Aleppo Governorate and one in Idlib Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any violations.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation: in Qabr al-Sitt, Damascus Governorate, 250 food parcels with a total weight of 1.08 tons were delivered.

In total, 1,990 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,116.41 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (14 November 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire in Aleppo Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any violations.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation: in Rayyan, Aleppo Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.95 tons were delivered.

In total, 1,991 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,118.36 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/1028

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2018

Original: English

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 2303 (2016), in which the Security Council requested me to report to it on the situation in Burundi every three months, including on any public incidents of incitement to hatred and violence. Since my previous report of 25 January 2018 (S/2018/89), my Special Envoy for Burundi has conducted several visits to Burundi and the region, held consultations with the African Union Commission for the Great Lakes Region, and provided briefings to the Security Council on 10 and 24 May and 9 August 2018. My Special Envoy also met with President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, and former President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, the mediator and the facilitator, respectively, of the East African Community-led dialogue process.

2. The present report covers political developments in Burundi since August 2018, including regional initiatives and my Special Envoy's efforts to help to revive the inter-Burundian dialogue process, and contains information on activities conducted by the entities of the United Nations system in Burundi.

II. Major developments

A. Political developments

3. The signing by the ruling party and various political parties allied to it of a road map for the general elections to be held in 2020 and the appointment of new members of the national independent electoral commission, la Commission électorale nationale indépendente, are two notable political developments that have taken place in Burundi during the period under review, both of which have been contested by the opposition coalition. In addition, the convening of the fifth session of the inter-Burundian dialogue in October was the main highlight of the reporting period.

4. The facilitator of the East African Community-led inter-Burundian dialogue held consultations from 20 to 22 October with civil society organizations, including women, young people and members of the media and religious groups. From 25 to 29 October, the facilitator held the fifth session of the dialogue process. The Government, the ruling party, its political allies and civil society organizations affiliated with it did not participate in either the dialogue or the consultations.

18-18915 (E) 191118

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Developments within Burundi

5. On 7 June, the new constitution was promulgated by President of Burundi Pierre Nkurunziza, who also declared at the time that he would not stand for re-election in 2020. Subsequently, on 3 August, members of the Ministry of the Interior, Civic Education and Local Development invited registered political parties to attend a meeting in Kayanza province to discuss issues relating to the 2020 elections and to seek agreement on themes such as peace consolidation, democracy, political tolerance, inclusiveness and the promotion of human rights. Twenty-two of Burundi's 32 registered political parties attended the meeting, which also featured a discussion on the electoral code and legislation pertaining to political parties. At its conclusion, 20 of the 22 participants adopted a road map for the 2020 elections, including leaders of the Union pour le progrès national (UPRONA) and other parties considered to be affiliated with the ruling Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD). The outcome document, known as the 2018 Kayanza road map, has not been made public, however, participants at the meeting shared that, in the road map, those who adopted it: (a) commended government efforts to re-establish peace in Burundi; (b) urged investment in the country; (c) called for free elections, freedom of political space and freedom of expression; (d) called for political pluralism; (e) recognised that no political actor, except those who were allegedly involved in the coup attempt of May 2015, was subject to judicial proceedings; (f) encouraged the return of political actors and of refugees; and (g) guaranteed the independence of the national independent electoral commission. Signatories of the document noted that it would ensure the return of exiled politicians who were not under prosecution by the Burundian judiciary and allow for the registration of the returnees whose names were missing from the electoral registers compiled prior to the constitutional referendum of May 2018. On 25 September, during a radio talk show to discuss the Kayanza road map, the Assistant Minister of the Interior stated that, with the new constitution in place, the inter-Burundian dialogue was obsolete and that any further dialogue should be held in Bujumbura.

6. Representatives of both the Sahwanya-Front pour la démocratie du Burundi (Sahwanya-FRODEBU) party and the Rassemblement national pour le changement (RANAC) party attended the Kayanza meeting but declined to sign the document. A Sahwanya-FRODEBU spokesperson stated that the meeting had no consensus and that the road map had been prepared in advance by unknown actors. Separately, a RANAC representative declared that the party would challenge CNDD-FDD in the 2020 elections. The opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi, led by Agathon Rwasa, was invited to the Kayanza session but did not attend. Its members criticised the process as lacking inclusivity, noting that many political actors had been excluded.

7. The opposition coalition in diaspora, or the external opposition, Conseil national pour le respect de l'Accord d'Arusha pour la paix et la réconciliation au Burundi et la restauration de l'état de droit (CNARED), held an extraordinary session on 4 and 5 August 2018, in response to the promulgation of the new constitution, which it indicated had effectively destroyed the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. In a further statement, on 28 August 2018, CNARED called for the East African Community-led dialogue to urgently organise a "real round of negotiations, as inclusive as possible, in order to put an end to the Burundian political crisis". On 14 September, the CNARED Chairperson addressed a letter to the facilitator in which he listed issues and requirements that could facilitate the success of the upcoming dialogue session, including: (a) compliance with the principle of inclusivity through the participation of all parties and members of CNARED, including those who have arrest warrants filed against them; (b) high-level representation of the Government of Burundi; (c) presence of the mediator in the talks; (d) improved conditions for

refugees in Tanzania; and (e) the continued engagement of the African Union and the United Nations as partners with the East African Community in its facilitation.

8. On 20 August, while celebrating the anniversary of his re-election in 2015, Mr. Nkurunziza expressed his appreciation to those Burundians who had voted for him in 2015 and welcomed "the peaceful, secure and calm climate across the country", noting the "total freedom" of the population. He reiterated his commitment to reconciling Burundians and to promoting the values of love, complementarity, discipline and mutual respect. The President also warned against any attempt to overthrow elected institutions, threatening those who should dare of "falling into their own trap".

9. On 18 September, the President presided over the swearing-in ceremony of the new members of the national independent electoral commission, whose selection had been confirmed by Parliament on 29 August. The newly elected members swore allegiance to the national unity charter, the Constitution and the law and pledged to organise independent, impartial, free and fair elections with a "strong sense of patriotism". Members of the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition denounced the new configuration as lacking inclusivity and objected to the fact that they had not been consulted.

10. According to the new constitution, independent members of coalitions are not permitted to stand for election. As a result, prominent opposition figure Mr. Rwasa announced the creation of his political party, Le Front national pour la liberté (FNL) Amizero y'Abarundi, on 12 September 2018. The development was understood to reflect his intention to run in the 2020 presidential race. In announcing the new party, he appealed to other members of the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition, in particular those from the non-recognized wing of UPRONA, to join it. Consequently, the leader of the registered Forces nationales de libération (FNL) party, Jacques Bigirimana, filed a complaint with the Ministry of the Interior against Mr. Rwasa for plagiarizing the acronym FNL.

11. On 18 October, the president of the Sahwanya-Frodebu opposition political party announced the party's withdrawal from the CNARED opposition platform. The decision was reportedly taken in order to attract to the party more supporters who wished to see the democratic ideals of late President Melchior Ndadaye realized. Sahwanya-Frodebu also called upon all political actors involved in the inter-Burundian dialogue to work together to resolve the crisis in Burundi.

Inter-Burundian dialogue

12. At the nineteenth ordinary summit of the East African Community, held in in Kampala on 23 February 2018, the facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue was asked to "expeditiously conclude" the dialogue process; he subsequently made plans to hold a fifth session of the dialogue in April 2018. The effort was hampered, however, by the Government's announcement that it would not participate in any dialogue-related activity until after the constitutional referendum. After the promulgation of the Constitution, the facilitator dispatched his team to consult with the Government, political parties, the external opposition coalition, civil society organizations, young people, women, religious groups and the media on the holding of the fifth session and its agenda.

13. A delegation of the joint technical working group, comprising the East African Community facilitation team and representatives of the African Union and the United Nations, met in Bujumbura from 16 to 18 August to begin preparations for the fifth session of the dialogue. During the visit to Bujumbura, the working group met with members of CNDD-FDD and its political allies, who stressed that the country was stable and that several items on the facilitator's agenda had been resolved, notably

the amendment of the Constitution and the issue of presidential term limits. They nevertheless agreed to participate in the fifth session, on the condition that it would be the last. CNDD-FDD noted that the 2018 Kayanza road map should be the basis for the dialogue and called for the process to be moved to Burundi.

14. While in Burundi, the joint technical working group also met with representatives of the Amizero y'Abarundi opposition coalition and other opposition political parties. It was their view that there were several unresolved items on the proposed agenda to be discussed during the dialogue, including the reconfiguration of the national independent electoral commission and the emergence of a consensual road map with a hybrid mechanism that could closely monitor its implementation. They also concurred that the fifth session should be the final one.

15. From 6 to 8 September 2018, the joint technical working group visited Brussels for consultations with the external opposition coalition. CNARED members expressed a willingness to participate in the fifth session. They reiterated, however, that they be invited as a bloc rather than as individuals, including those who have arrest warrants filed against them. They also expressed their apprehension with regard to the Government's position that the fifth session should be the last.

16. Following the consultations in Bujumbura and Brussels, the joint technical working group concluded that there was sufficient convergence of perspectives to convene a meaningful session and began preparations to hold a meeting in Arusha. The facilitation team also recommended to the facilitator that he convene a meeting of representatives of civil society organizations, including women's, youth and religious groups and the media, ahead of the plenary session.

17. On the basis of the findings of the consultations, the facilitator scheduled the fifth session of the dialogue to take place from 19 to 24 October. However, the Government of Burundi requested that it be postponed until after 24 October to allow for the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the assassination of the former President, Mr. Ndadaye, organized for 21 October. The facilitator therefore rescheduled the session to take place from 24 to 29 October.

18. On 20 October, the facilitation opened consultations with representatives of women's, youth and religious groups and the media. The meeting was attended by 13 representatives from Bujumbura and outside Burundi. Civil society organizations allied to the Government boycotted the meeting, however, despite having received airplane tickets issued by the United Nations, noting that the facilitator had failed to respond positively to the Government's preconditions. Upon completion of the consultations, on 22 October, participants submitted information on the outcome of their discussions, with a list of recommendations and a road map for the 2020 elections.

19. On 19 October, the Government again requested that the dialogue be postponed, this time until November, arguing that the month of October was a mourning period. In a communiqué dated 23 October, the Government indicated that it would not participate in the fifth session, citing the same reason. Government officials also objected to the fact that certain preconditions had not been met, namely, that the fifth session should focus solely on the 2018 Kayanza road map and that the list of participants be shared ahead of the session. Following consultations with the mediator and subregional leaders, the facilitator postponed the session by one day in order to provide an additional opportunity for the Government, the ruling party and its allies to attend.

20. On 25 October, the facilitator opened the fifth session of the inter-Burundian dialogue, in the absence of the Government, the ruling party and its allied parties. The session was attended by 41 representatives of political parties and political actors

from within and outside Burundi, including two former Heads of State and six key women political and civil society actors. In his opening statement, the facilitator encouraged participants to provide a consensus document, taking into account the 2018 Kayanza road map that was developed by the Government, CNDD-FDD and allied parties, the 2018 Entebbe road map drafted by the internal and external opposition coalition during a joint meeting held from 21 to 23 September, and the recommendations made by the representatives of civil society, women's and youth organizations and the media and religious groups as a result of their meeting in Arusha.

21. The fifth session was concluded by the facilitator on 29 October. In his closing remarks, he emphasized that it was time to reassess his role and the facilitation process as a whole. He thanked the facilitation team and the joint technical working group for their excellent and serious work and for the support they had provided to him throughout his tenure. He announced that he would develop a joint road map, comprising the participants' consensus road map and other previously drafted road maps. The facilitator's road map would include the principles and minimum standards that he considered to be matters of consensus, in an effort to ensure the holding of credible elections in 2020. He plans to present the document, as well as his final report on the dialogue process, to the mediator and other Heads of State of the East African Community, at the upcoming ordinary summit to be held on 30 November 2018, so that they may consider the way forward.

B. Security situation

22. During the period under review, the overall security situation remained generally calm, amid the discovery by police of weapons and ammunition, as well as reported cases of murder, arbitrary arrests and disappearances. A number of attacks on villages and military positions by unidentified armed men were also reported.

23. Human rights organizations continued to receive allegations of human rights violations and abuses, including killings, forced disappearances, ill-treatment, cases of arbitrary arrest and detention and threats and restrictions on freedom of association, expression and movement. The victims of most human rights violations are reportedly predominantly members of opposition political parties, in particular FNL-Rwasa members or members of opposition coalitions perceived as opponents to the regime who voted against the amendment of the Constitution in the referendum held in May 2018. The national intelligence service, the police and the Imbonerakure are accused by those organizations of being the perpetrators.

24. Several attacks by armed individuals were also reported. On 4 September 2018, two unidentified armed individuals attacked Nkurubuye colline, in Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province, along the Tanzania-Burundi border. The attackers reportedly fled towards Tanzania. No casualties were reported. At night on 15 September 2018, a military post in Bujumbura province on the border between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo came under attack by an unidentified armed group, which had reportedly crossed into Burundi. Police reported that one assailant was killed, one policeman was wounded, five vehicles were set ablaze and many properties were destroyed. The Attorney-General of Burundi attributed the attack to a group of bandits who intended to rob a bank. The murder of a local Imbonerakure leader and his wife, on 19 September 2018 in Buyumpu zone, Kayanza province, near the border with Rwanda, was attributed to members of an armed group that came from Rwanda by the Ministry of Public Security; the group subsequently crossed back into Rwanda. No intervention by the security forces was reported on the border. Rwanda did not respond to the accusation.

25. In Mukike commune, Bujumbura Rural province, four people were killed and two others wounded on 3 August 2018 in clashes between national army soldiers and unidentified armed men. Three of the alleged assailants were detained for investigation. Clashes between members of the Imbonerakure and an army soldier from the Mudubugu military camp were reported on 4 August in Bubanza province, and they resulted in the death of one person and injuries to three others. A Burundian military vehicle was reportedly ambushed during the night of 5 August in the area of Rukoko forest, Bubanza province, along the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The attack resulted in the death of three soldiers and the injury of five others. The spokesperson of the Burundian armed group Forces nationales de libération-Nzabampema claimed responsibility for the attack and warned the Burundian army away from venturing into the Rukoko area.

26. On 20 October in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Kivu province, authorities reported clashes between the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and a Burundian armed rebel group in Kabunambo village on the Uvira-Bukavu highway. Rebels had reportedly crossed the border along the Ruzizi River and were heading to hills and mountains in the Uvira area. FARDC reportedly killed one Burundian rebel and arrested five others. A village chief indicated that a significant number of Burundian armed rebel groups had been seen moving to Kirema, Bwegera and other villages in Uvira area, South Kivu province. Similar incidents were reported on 23 October, resulting in the killing of four Burundian rebels belonging to the Résistance pour un État de droit au Burundi-Tabara armed group and six others jailed in Uvira town. The incident occurred following armed confrontations between FARDC and the rebels at the Rubarika locality. FARDC confirmed having seized 22 AK-47s, 1 heavy gun and 1 mortar, which were reportedly used by the Burundian rebels.

C. Socioeconomic developments

27. On 22 August 2018 in Gitega commune and province, the Government launched a 10-year national development plan aimed at bolstering the country's economy. The national development plan is anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals, with 36 key targets identified. It is aimed at promoting the development of the rural areas in Burundi by 2027 through: (a) efforts to strengthen democracy, good governance and the rule of law; (b) inclusive growth for economic resilience and sustainable development; and (c) sustainable management of the environment and climate change and land-use planning. The national development plan would require $2.5 billion to be fully implemented. International donors have been advised by the Government of Burundi to use it as a framework for providing assistance covering the various sectors of agriculture and livestock, food security, support to infrastructure, development of the mining sector, environmental management and climate change, health and social protection. The President stressed that the national development plan would lead to economic sustainability in Burundi. The Minister for Foreign Affairs invited members of the international community and organizations to the launch event and requested that they contribute to the financing of the national development plan.

28. On 5 October 2018, the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission held a meeting with a focus on socioeconomic development and the national development plan. Its Chair, Jürg Lauber, shared his plans to travel to Burundi from 4 to 7 November in order to convene a socioeconomic retreat and engage with the Government on the national development plan. At the meeting, the resident coordinator provided an update on the situation on the ground. He informed participants that the United Nations country team was in the process of completing a new United Nations development assistance framework, which would be aligned with

the new national development plan. The resident coordinator highlighted some positive recent trends, including improvements in health, education and agriculture. He underlined that access to education had considerably improved. He stressed that cyclical shocks had reversed some development gains and highlighted continued humanitarian needs. He noted that some 56 per cent of children still suffered from malnutrition.

29. The Peacebuilding Fund approved $7.1 million in September 2018 for the promotion of expanding political space and strengthening good governance. The two new Fund projects are aimed at empowering women and young people in political processes, promoting localized conflict resolution and prevention support, alleviating the consequences of displacement and return and strengthening the rule of law and good governance.

D. Humanitarian situation

30. The humanitarian situation remains fragile and is marked by high levels of vulnerability and acute humanitarian needs in some sectors. Levels of food insecurity and malnutrition have improved, compared with 2017, due to two consecutive relatively good agricultural seasons. Some 1.7 million people are still food insecure, a 35 per cent decrease compared with 2017. A slight reduction has been reported in internal displacement of the population, with the number of internally displaced persons estimated at 159,000 in August 2018, most of whom are displaced owing to natural disasters, according to estimates of the International Organization for Migration. However, an increase in displacement is expected, owing to the start of the rainy season, which began in September.

31. On 27 September, the National Security Council of Burundi decided to suspend all activities of international non-governmental organizations working in the country for three months, pending compliance with the regulations guiding international non-governmental organizations issued on 23 January 2017. The regulations require that international non-governmental organizations provide the Ministry of Finance with access to their finances, maintain a third of their budget in the State bank and adhere to ethnic quotas in the recruitment of staff (60 per cent Hutu, 40 per cent Tutsi, 30 per cent women). As a result of the suspension, the voluntary repatriation programme was put on hold, mainly because key activities, such as transport and logistics, transit centre management, protection and health, had until that time been carried out by two international non-governmental organizations. The suspension has had a critical impact on programmes for the 70,000 Congolese refugees in four camps in Burundi. Refugees in camps and those in urban areas have also been affected by the Government's decision, and the services provided by those international non-governmental organizations have been reduced to only essential activities.

32. On 17 October, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations issued a joint statement in which they stressed the importance of the work of international non-governmental organizations in Burundi in, inter alia, fighting malaria, HIV/AIDS and malnutrition, supporting the voluntary return of refugees and engaging in the agriculture, energy and entrepreneurship sectors. They offered to support the negotiation efforts between the non-governmental organizations and the Government.

33. As at 9 November, about 25 international non-governmental organizations have received authorization from the Minister of the Interior to resume their activities, after having presented the required documents. Another 40 have also submitted their documents and should resume operations shortly. The Ministry of Agriculture has set

up a commission to observe the recruitment of the staff of international non-governmental organizations and their procurement practices.

34. During the period under review, almost 1,000 refugees per week returned from Tanzania to Burundi under the Burundi-Tanzania-Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) tripartite agreement. As at 27 September 2018, 52,160 refugees had been repatriated to Burundi, mainly from Tanzania, but also from Kenya. The number of Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries stood at 383,283, of whom 227,510 were in Tanzania. The United Nations Development Programme, UNHCR and other United Nations entities are working on socioeconomic reintegration activities for returnees. However, it is estimated that an additional 1,000 refugees leave Burundi per month. Continued advocacy for the full respect of international standards guiding the right of asylum and voluntary nature of returns is essential.

35. The level of humanitarian financing for Burundi remains low. The 2018 humanitarian response plan, the implementation of which requires some $142 million, was 52 per cent funded as at 9 November.

E. Human rights and judicial cooperation

Human rights violations and abuses

36. The human rights situation in Burundi remains a concern. During the reporting period, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued to receive allegations of human rights violations and abuses, including killings, forced disappearances, ill-treatment, cases of arbitrary arrest and detention and threats and restrictions on freedom of association, expression and movement. At least 45 unidentified dead bodies were found throughout the country, some bearing signs of having been subjected to violence. Persistent violations and abuses of human rights contributed to a climate of intimidation in the country. In most cases, targets of such violations were members of opposition political parties or coalitions, those suspected of opposing the Government or those who voted or were perceived to have voted against the amendment of the Constitution in the 17 May referendum. Members of the national intelligence service, the police, the army and the Imbonerakure were reportedly the primary perpetrators.

37. The limited democratic space remains a critical concern in the context of the constitutional referendum and as the debate for the elections to be held in 2020 begins. Civil liberties, such as freedom of expression, association and movement continued to be restricted, including the suspension of the activities of some local news networks and human rights organizations. Individuals belonging to opposition political parties, when seen together, are often accused of holding illegal meetings, arrested, detained and later released. However, some of them are detained beyond the 14-day legal time limit, with reports of physical abuse. On 13 August 2018 in Gitega, human rights defender and former head of Association burundaise pour la protection des droits humains et des personnes détenues Nestor Nibitanga was accused of undermining the internal security of the State and of rebellion and was subsequently sentenced to five years' imprisonment. He is the fifth human rights defender to be sentenced since March 2018, following Germain Rukuki (32 years' imprisonment) and three members of the local non-governmental organization Parole et action pour le réveil des consciences et l'évolution des mentalités (10 years' imprisonment each).

38. The ongoing political impasse has had a negative impact on the ensuring of economic, social and cultural rights, which has seen little improvement. An increase in unemployment and a rise in the prices of basic commodities and services have negatively affected the population, and children in particular; this has led to an

increase in the school dropout rate and has hindered efforts to address severe malnutrition.

Cooperation with human rights and judicial mechanisms

39. Contrary to the commitment of the Government of Burundi to resume full cooperation with OHCHR, noted with satisfaction by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 36/2, discussions on the new memorandum of understanding between OHCHR and the Government have remained stalled. The Government has not responded to the most recent note verbale, of 8 May.

40. In its report (A/HRC/39/63), the Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry on Burundi indicated that serious human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, had persisted in Burundi in 2017 and 2018. Documented violations included cases of summary execution, enforced disappearance, cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, sexual violence and violations of civil liberties, such as freedom of expression, association, assembly and movement (ibid., paras. 10 and 77). Opposition and suspected opposition members were cited as the primary targets, especially those who refused to join the ruling CNDD-FDD party, refused to register to vote in the constitutional referendum or refused to pay contributions. The key perpetrators were identified as members of the Imbonerakure, the police and the national intelligence service. The Government has once again refused any cooperation with the Commission of Inquiry, despite the repeated requests and initiatives of the Commission.

41. Various government officials, leaders of political parties, and civil society representatives deemed to be close to the ruling CNDD-FDD party, as well as the Independent National Human Rights Commission, denounced the report of the Commission of Inquiry. The Minister of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender of Burundi accused the Commission of being at the centre of "an international conspiracy against the Government". On 11 September, both the National Assembly and the Senate rejected the report, following briefings by the Ministers of Justice, the Interior and Human Rights. The Speaker of the Senate accused the Commission of collecting false information on social media and figures provided by insurgents and by "putschists based in Rwanda". The Speaker of the National Assembly said that the report had been "drafted solely based on what the commissioners wanted" and had failed to mention the Government's achievements regarding justice, human rights and security.

42. On 12 September, the Government declared the three members of the Commission of Inquiry personae non gratae. The Government and allied civil society organizations organized peaceful demonstrations on 15 and 22 September, respectively, in Bujumbura and in several other regions of the country to protest against the report. When the Commission of Inquiry presented its report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 24 October, a representative of the delegation of Burundi delivered a statement rejecting the report of the Commission and claiming that the Commissioners were "remotely controlled by external forces". The representative of Burundi threatened the members of the Commission, stating that his country "reserved the legitimate right to bring to justice the authors [of the report] for defamation and destabilization attempt against Burundi" as "criminal responsibility was [considered] individual". Allegations that the President had used hate speech was also "a defamation that would not go unpunished". In response, the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement on 25 October, deeply regretting Burundi's belligerent and defamatory response to the findings of the Commission of Inquiry and its members for the work they had done at the express request of the Human Rights Council, of which Burundi is a member.

43. Mr. Rwasa, leader of the Amizero y'Abarundi opposition coalition and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, called upon the Ministry of Justice to prosecute all perpetrators of human rights violations "in order to avoid providing the United Nations with pretexts to make such accusations". Members of his parliamentary group and other opposition members meanwhile welcomed the report as "truthful and necessary". On 8 August 2018, 36 Burundian and international non-governmental organizations addressed a petition to the Human Rights Council calling for the renewal of the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry, deeming it "critically important" to improving the human rights situation in the country. By its resolution 39/14 of 28 September 2018, the Human Rights Council extended the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi for an additional year and urged the Government to cooperate fully with the Commission.

44. The suspension of the activities of international non-governmental organizations operating in Burundi, on 27 September, has been interpreted as an effort to exert greater control over them and their work at the community level, in particular in the lead up to the 2020 elections.

III. Activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi and his Office

45. My Special Envoy travelled to Burundi from 3 to 11 September to continue his engagement with national stakeholders, including on the inter-Burundian dialogue. In the margins of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, my Special Envoy also interacted with stakeholders and partners concerned with the inter-Burundian dialogue and the situation in Burundi. He travelled again for further consultations from 2 to 11 November.

46. In Bujumbura, during his earlier visit in September, my Special Envoy met with government officials, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, representatives of political parties, including the opposition, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the Great Lakes Region, women's groups, religious leaders, former Heads of State, members of the diplomatic corps and other members of the international community. The objectives of the visit were to assess developments on the ground and to discuss the participation of all stakeholders in the fifth session of the dialogue. With the Minister for Foreign Affairs, my Special Envoy discussed the dialogue process, relations between the United Nations and Burundi and the finalization of the status-of-mission agreement between the Government and his Office in Bujumbura.

47. On 12 September in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, my Special Envoy briefed the facilitator of the dialogue on the outcome of his meetings in Burundi with various stakeholders, and further discussed the inter-Burundian dialogue process. At the meeting, they exchanged views on the need to ensure that the appropriate preparations are made before convening the fifth dialogue session, bearing in mind the substantive divergences listed in the conclusions of the fourth dialogue session.

48. My Special Envoy held consultations with various stakeholders on the status of the inter-Burundian dialogue, as well as prospects for holding its fifth session, in the margins of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly in New York from 25 to 28 September. He met with the Prime Minister of Uganda, Ruhakana Rugunda, who confirmed the commitment of the President of Uganda to assist in the advancement of the East African Community-led inter-Burundian dialogue. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burundi, Ezéchiel Nibigira, affirmed to my Special Envoy his Government's commitment to participate fully in the fifth session of the dialogue. My Special Envoy also consulted with a number of European permanent representatives

and special envoys. In a meeting held in the margins of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, members of the international contact group on Burundi recommitted themselves to support the fifth dialogue session.

IV. Observations and recommendations

49. The decision by the Government of Burundi, the ruling party, and allied parties to not attend the fifth session of the inter-Burundian dialogue has been received with concern by various stakeholders and external partners. At meetings held in the margins of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly in September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs shared his Government's concerns on the process but also reiterated his Gc .ernment's commitment to participate in the upcoming session of the inter-Burundian dialogue. While I took note of the Government's conditions for attending the process, it is ultimately the responsibility of the authorities to create a conducive environment in which the country can fulfil its potential and the people of Burundi enjoy their rights and freedoms, including participation in credible and inclusive elections. I believe that the East African Community-led inter-Burundian dialogue can help to achieve that objective.

50. The political situation in Burundi continues to require the focused attention of the international community in general, and that of the Security Council in particular, as mistrust continues to run deep between the Government and the ruling party on the one hand, and the opposition on the other. The lack of significant progress on the inter-Burundian dialogue towards a lasting resolution of the 2015 crisis remains a matter of serious concern, especially as Burundi prepares for the elections to be held in 2020. Furthermore, grave concerns continue to be expressed with regard to violations and abuses of human rights across the country.

51. I believe that President Nkurunziza's declaration in June that he would not seek another term in office could contribute to easing political tension and has the potential to bring the parties together to reach consensus while the preparation for the 2020 general elections is under way.

52. I commend the East African Community mediator, Mr. Museveni, and the facilitator, Mr. Mkapa, the African Union and my Special Envoy for their tireless efforts to resume the inter-Burundian dialogue and encourage the concerned parties to meet their obligations in putting an end to the political crisis in the country. I appeal to the East African Community and to all the leaders of the region to redouble their efforts in order to ensure that stability is restored in Burundi, while preserving the gains of the historic Arusha Agreement for Burundi.

53. While the focus of the political dialogue is shifting towards the preparation of the upcoming 2020 elections, all parties should be aware that lasting peace can only be achieved and sustained if a spirit of compromise and the principles of the rule of law are applied in the overall governance of the State. Therefore, in order to create an environment conducive to a resolution to the crisis and to the holding of elections, the country needs to engage in strengthening the capacity of its security institutions to make them more accountable and of service to the people.

54. I take note of the African Union Peace and Security Council discussion on Burundi, held on 19 September, at which it adopted a number of decisions. The Peace and Security Council reaffirmed its commitment to the spirit and letter of the Arusha Agreement, and its support to the efforts of the East African Community-led inter-Burundian dialogue. It also decided to reduce the number of African Union human rights observers and military experts in Burundi, while extending their mandate. I call upon the African Union to maintain its engagement in supporting

Burundi and the East African Community as the country moves forward towards the holding of the elections in 2020. The efforts of the East African Community can only be made stronger with the endorsement and the support of the African Union and the United Nations. The United Nations, in particular through my Special Envoy, will continue its efforts in this regard.

55. I also take note that the security situation across the country continues to improve, despite reported incidents, acts of violence and alleged incursions of armed individuals. I urge the Government, however, to open up political space, ensure the full respect and protection of human rights and quell acts of intimidation. Improving the security situation in the country will greatly help to ensure the holding of credible elections in 2020.

56. I am deeply concerned about continuous reports of human rights violations and abuses and related crimes and call upon the Burundian authorities to conduct full, impartial, independent, effective and thorough investigations into serious violations and abuses of human rights so that all perpetrators are held accountable and all victims are allowed access to effective remedies and adequate reparations.

57. I call upon the Government to fully resume, without further delay, cooperation with all United Nations human rights mechanisms. I encourage it to conclude the discussions with OHCHR towards the discharge of its full mandate in Burundi and the signing of the required memorandum of understanding.

58. I urge the Government to give due consideration to the recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry mandated by the Human Rights Council and to implement them. I strongly encourage the Government to engage in dialogue with the Commission for the sake of the Burundian people and the neighbouring countries affected by the instability in Burundi.

59. I am deeply concerned by the precarious socioeconomic situation in Burundi, which is an outcome of the political crisis. Addressing the economic challenges will require a renewed effort to restore confidence and trust between the Government of Burundi on the one hand and the donor community and development partners on the other. I welcome the launching of the national development plan for Burundi, which has the potential to offer new avenues of engagement. I call upon the Government of Burundi and its development partners to forge closer ties and work together to implement the national development plan.

60. I also urge the Government to work with my Special Envoy to expedite the finalization of the status-of-mission agreement.

61. I call upon all relevant regional and international partners, including members of the Security Council, to engage in a thorough discussion following the summit of the Heads of State of the East African Community, to be held in late November, in order to take stock and agree on the way forward. In the light of the situation in Burundi, I will propose a set of options for the role of the United Nations in Burundi, following close consultations with key international partners, including the East African Community and African Union.

62. I appreciate the determined efforts of my Special Envoy and the entities of the United Nations system in Burundi. The United Nations continues to be a partner to Burundi and will do its utmost to support the country in finding solutions to its political and socioeconomic challenges.

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Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 21 June to 26 October 2018

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since my report of 13 July 2018 (S/2018/703), including of the specific provisions of resolutions 2373 (2017) and 2433 (2018). During the reporting period, the situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained generally calm. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued to consolidate security along the border with the Syrian Arab Republic as part of extending the control of the Government over all Lebanese territory. Nevertheless, the reaffirmed commitment by both parties to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) notwithstanding, there remain outstanding obligations for both parties under the resolution and there was no progress towards a permanent ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel.

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

2. The UNIFIL area of operations and the area along the Blue Line remained relatively calm, notwithstanding a serious incident on 4 August when a UNIFIL patrol was attacked in Majdal Zun (Sector West) (see para. 16). The UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and my Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon maintained permanent liaison with both parties to de-escalate tensions and continued to urge them to use established channels to address concerns and refrain from any action threatening the cessation of hostilities.

3. UNIFIL continued to monitor the construction works by the Israel Defense Forces south of the Blue Line, which led to tensions on several occasions. On 30 July, UNIFIL observed Israel Defense Forces civilian contractors crossing the Blue Line east of Kfar Kila (Sector East) while initiating earth-digging works, in close proximity to one of the Lebanese "reservation" areas, triggering the deployment of both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces on their respective sides of the Blue Line. The main armament of an Israel Defense Forces tank was pointed north of

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the Blue Line. Following engagement with the parties by the UNIFIL liaison teams, the Israel Defense Forces withdrew from the area and the civilian contractors continued their work south of the Blue Line.

4. In seven additional separate incidents, UNIFIL observed weapons pointed by the Israel Defense Forces towards the north, including once at Lebanese Armed Forces personnel and on six occasions at UNIFIL personnel or positions. In addition, on 14 August, the Israel Defense Forces fired six smoke grenades, of which at least one landed north of the Blue Line in Rumaysh (Sector West), setting fire to an area stretching south and north of the Blue Line. Israel Defense Forces and Lebanese Armed Forces personnel helped to extinguish the fire. UNIFIL, through its liaison branch, de-escalated the situation.

5. From 5 July to 24 October, UNIFIL recorded 319 Blue Line ground violations, 312 of which were committed by civilians crossing south of the Blue Line, including 208 violations mainly by shepherds and farmers predominantly in the Shab'a Farms area, Kfar Kila, and farmers cultivating their fields, mainly near Rumaysh, as well as 77 violations in connection with the Shu'ayb well near Blida (Sector East). Members of the Lebanese Armed Forces crossed the Blue Line south-east of Kfar Kila on three separate occasions on 12 September while photographing the Israel Defense Forces works. Members of the Lebanese Armed Forces also crossed the Blue Line in Yarun (Sector West) on 15 October and Kfar Kila on 17 October for unknown reasons. On 25 September, two Lebanese municipal police officers crossed the Blue Line in Kfar Kila in connection with ground levelling works being conducted north of the Blue Line. An excavator belonging to the Israel Defense Forces crossed the Blue Line in Yarun on 3 September while clearing vegetation along the technical fence. On 30 July, UNIFIL observed three hunters firing six rounds while south of the Blue Line, close to Mays al-Jabal (Sector East).

6. Israel continued to violate Lebanese airspace almost daily, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and Lebanese sovereignty. From 5 July to 24 October, UNIFIL recorded 550 air violations, totalling 2,057 overflight hours. Unmanned aerial vehicles accounted for 481 of the violations (87 per cent), with the remaining violations involving fighter jets or unidentified aircraft. UNIFIL protested against all the violations to the Israel Defense Forces and urged their immediate cessation.

7. The occupation of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line by the Israel Defense Forces continued. While the Government of Lebanon has welcomed the UNIFIL proposal for the facilitation of the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the occupied area, shared with the parties in 2011, the Government of Israel has yet to respond.

8. The delineation of the maritime boundary between Israel and Lebanon remains disputed. Lebanon maintains that the line of buoys, unilaterally installed by Israel, runs through its territorial waters, and does not recognize it. The United Nations does not recognize the line of buoys.

9. Lebanon also alleged that Israel continued to violate its sovereignty by conducting electronic monitoring, espionage and surveillance through infrastructure deployed south of and along the Blue Line and devices placed on Lebanese territory.

10. Pursuant to resolution 1701 (2006), UNIFIL continued to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in establishing an area between the Blue Line and the Litani River free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces operated a daily average of 67 coordinated activities, including patrols, 16 permanent checkpoints, 5 temporary checkpoints and 10 counter-rocket-launching operations across the area of operations, with the Lebanese Armed Forces spot-checking

vehicles. This level of coordinated activities represents 19 per cent of UNIFIL operational activities, taking into consideration only those activities that could be conducted in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. UNIFIL has continued to accord priority to certain operational activities conducted in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, including foot patrols along the Blue Line and night patrols. It is aiming to increase the involvement of the Lebanese Armed Forces in civil-military coordination projects by fully utilizing the regional centre for civil-military coordination for south Lebanon, inaugurated in May.

11. UNIFIL maintained its high operational tempo in line with resolution 2373 (2017), as reiterated in paragraph 20 of resolution 2433 (2018). From July to October, it conducted an average of 14,346 monthly military operational activities, including an average of 6,782 patrols. Almost weekly, UNIFIL vehicle, foot and air patrols maintained an operational footprint in all municipalities and villages in the area of operations. Areas in which the mission had previously experienced a higher number of restrictions of movement or incidents were visited more frequently. Air reconnaissance patrols continued to be concentrated over those areas with limited access for ground patrols, such as private properties, rugged terrain or land contaminated by explosive remnants of war or anti-personnel mines.

12. UNIFIL continued to focus its operational activities on patrols, in particular foot patrols, along the Blue Line. It also continued to conduct a high number of night patrols and enhanced the use of its air assets, increasing its day and night reconnaissance flight hours per month from an average of 36 hours in July–October 2017 and 54 hours in March–June 2018 to 63 hours in July–September 2018. UNIFIL maintains close contact with the Lebanese Armed Forces through monthly meetings and joint operational activities, as well as with local leaders, including to address any sensitivities with local communities.

13. UNIFIL continued to monitor locations in which the Israel Defense Forces alleged the presence of unauthorized weapons and infrastructure in the UNIFIL area of operations but observed no violations of resolution 1701 (2006) at those locations during the reporting period.

14. In the course of its activities, UNIFIL observed 195 instances of individuals carrying hunting weapons, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006), mostly in the areas of Bastrah, Blida, Mays al-Jabal and Sarda (all Sector East) and Yarun. UNIFIL alerted the Lebanese Armed Forces to each incident. It also expressed its concerns to the Lebanese Armed Forces regarding reports of gunfire during a funeral on 11 August in Tyre (Sector West) and the presence of armed individuals during Ashura' commemorations on 20 September.

15. UNIFIL freedom of movement was generally respected. As detailed in annex I to the present report, in some instances municipal police officers, local leaders or members of local communities stopped UNIFIL patrols.

16. One of the most serious incidents involving UNIFIL personnel in recent years occurred on 4 August, when some 20 individuals in civilian clothes stopped a four-vehicle UNIFIL patrol in the village of Majdal Zun, allegedly because the peacekeepers were taking photographs. During the course of the incident, several individuals broke windows of the patrol vehicles with hammers, shot at two of the vehicles as they sought to disengage and poured gasoline on a vehicle, setting it ablaze. A peacekeeper inside suffered minor burns. Some individuals assaulted the peacekeepers, punching and beating the patrol commander with sticks as he attempted to mediate the situation and kicking and dragging another peacekeeper while he was on the ground. None of the peacekeepers sustained injuries that required medical treatment. Individuals also pointed weapons at the UNIFIL personnel, including at close range, snatching their weapons or demanding that they be handed over. The

patrol requested Lebanese Armed Forces support immediately. Weapons, ammunition and equipment were stolen from the patrol, most of which were later returned by the Lebanese Armed Forces.

17. In its press statement of 9 August, the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the attack against UNIFIL and called for a credible investigation to determine the exact circumstances. UNIFIL completed its internal investigation on 25 September. A UNIFIL military police investigation assessing the actions of the United Nations personnel has also completed its interim report. UNIFIL has urged the Lebanese Armed Forces to complete their investigation. The Head of Mission and Force Commander stressed to interlocutors from the Government of Lebanon that a full investigation must be conducted and the perpetrators held accountable, a message reiterated at Headquarters. UNIFIL resumed its regular patrolling in Majdal Zun, in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, on 25 September. A second patrol was conducted on 8 October. Both were completed without incident. UNIFIL will continue regular patrols in the location.

18. In addition to the above-mentioned incident, individuals in civilian clothes occasionally attempted to seize UNIFIL property. On 7 July, individuals who were being stopped by Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL in Kfar Kila attempted to seize a notebook from a UNIFIL patrol. On 13 July in Ayta al-Sha'b (Sector West), several individuals blocked the path of a patrol and attempted to steal a radio. On 6 September, an individual in Shab'a (Sector East) took a memory card from a UNIFIL camera. It was later returned by the Lebanese Armed Forces.

19. UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon continued their patrols to areas surrounding the sites of the Lebanese non-governmental organization Green without Borders, located close to the Blue Line, conducting an average of 200 vehicle patrols, 20 foot patrols and 10 air reconnaissance patrols per month. Following several incidents in May in which the patrols were stopped by Green without Borders personnel, UNIFIL inspected four sites, Marwahin, Ayta al-Sha'b, Labbunah (all Sector West) and Udaysah (Sector East), on 21 July, and three additional sites, one in Labbunah and two in Aytarun (both Sector West), on 27 September. Given that all the sites were located on private property, the inspections were carried out in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. No violations of resolution 1701 (2006) were observed.

20. Notwithstanding the aforementioned incidents, the relationship between the local population and UNIFIL remained largely positive. UNIFIL continued to implement quick-impact projects to support the extension of State authority in the south and contribute to force acceptance.

21. As described in annexes to my previous reports, UNIFIL has implemented all recommendations of the strategic review of UNIFIL in 2017 that could be implemented and continues to adhere to the priorities identified during the review (see S/2017/202).

22. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and UNIFIL continued to engage with the Lebanese authorities to ensure appropriate follow-up to the ministerial-level meeting known as the Rome II conference, held in March 2018, including the commitment of Lebanon to increasing the strength and presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the UNIFIL area of operations through the deployment of the model regiment and to build the capacity of the Navy. In July, the Government identified a building in Bayt Lif (Sector West) to be used as the model regiment headquarters. The Government, in close coordination with UNIFIL and my Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon, is discussing implementation modalities with potential donors.

23. In support of Lebanese efforts to build the capacity of and in close coordination with the Lebanese Navy, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force carried out maritime interdiction operations throughout the maritime area of operations, hailing an average of 25 vessels per day. Of the 2,890 vessels hailed during the reporting period, 745 were inspected and cleared by the Lebanese authorities.

24. The Lebanese Navy maintains a maritime picture of its territorial waters through its eight coastal radar stations. On 12 October, it obtained certification for a second seaworthy vessel that could remain at sea for up to 48 hours. However, both vessels for which crews are certified are undergoing maintenance. The Navy continues to lack the capacity to operate beyond 12 nautical miles from the coast, owing to an absence of appropriate vessels.

25. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to support efforts to build the capacity of the Lebanese Navy by conducting 389 training sessions aimed at improving the common operational standards for monitoring and hailing activities. The Government is reviewing options for increasing its naval capabilities, including deploying dedicated naval personnel, conducting training and obtaining additional assets. UNIFIL is working with the Lebanese Armed Forces to discuss steps towards the development of a comprehensive and practical plan for the enhancement of the Navy. As requested in paragraph 7 of resolution 2433 (2018), I will provide an assessment with recommendations in that regard as part of my next regular report.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

26. UNIFIL hosted two tripartite meetings, on 6 September and 18 October, during which liaison, coordination and violations of resolution 1701 (2006) were discussed. The Head of Mission and Force Commander also continued to liaise with the parties bilaterally to facilitate mutually acceptable solutions to contentious areas along the Blue Line, emphasizing confidence-building measures, such as the visible marking of the Blue Line. UNIFIL personnel held frequent bilateral exchanges with both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, including on tactical arrangements aimed at reducing tensions relating to recurring violations or particular incidents close to the Blue Line.

27. The establishment of a UNIFIL liaison office in Tel Aviv, Israel, continues to be raised with the Israeli authorities. Their agreement to the UNIFIL proposal in 2008 notwithstanding, the establishment of the office has remained pending.

28. UNIFIL continued to liaise with the Government of Lebanon, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies assisting in building the capacity of national institutions to protect civilians. UNIFIL also continued to train its personnel to ensure preparedness to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. In August, it facilitated a three-week workshop in Marjayoun (Sector East) for members of the Internal Security Forces aimed at building national capacity for protection, which included training on gender sensitivity, human rights and first aid. Since 2015, 390 individuals have participated in the training. Leadership training was also provided to Lebanese civil defence centres and firefighting squads in the UNIFIL area of operations.

29. UNIFIL continued to train military and civilian personnel on gender mainstreaming and preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence. In accordance with the United Nations system-wide strategy on gender parity, the mission adopted in March a gender parity strategy for civilian staff in the mission. A priority for UNIFIL is addressing the gender imbalance among senior staff and in the contingents serving in the Force. The Head of Mission and Force Commander has underlined in his meetings with ambassadors and visiting military officials of troop-

contributing countries the importance of increasing the number of women serving in the Force.

C. Disarming armed groups

30. No progress was achieved with regard to the disarmament of armed groups. Hizbullah continued to acknowledge publicly that it maintained a military capacity. On 14 August, its Secretary-General, Hassan Nasrallah, claimed that "Hizbullah might not be the strongest army in the Middle East, but it is certainly stronger than the Israeli army" and that "the Lebanese resistance — with its arms, personnel, expertise and capabilities — is stronger than ever". On 20 September, in addressing Israel, he said that, "no matter what you do to cut the route, the matter is over, and the resistance possesses precision and non-precision rockets and weapons capabilities". He added that, "if Israel imposes a war on Lebanon, Israel will face a fate and a reality it has never expected on any day". In direct response, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, warned that, "if [Nasrallah] confronts us, he will receive a lethal blow that he can't even imagine". The maintenance of arms outside the control of the State by Hizbullah and other groups continues to restrict the ability of the Government of Lebanon to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory.

31. In remarks delivered during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, on 27 September, Mr. Netanyahu stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran was "directing Hizbullah to build secret sites to convert inaccurate projectiles into precision-guided missiles" and accused Hizbullah of "deliberately using the innocent people of Beirut as human shields". In exercising its right of reply in the Assembly, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran denounced the information presented by Mr. Netanyahu. On 30 September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, Gebran Bassil, rejected the allegations and convened members of the diplomatic community on 1 October to a tour of the said sites, while acknowledging that Hizbullah had made "many statements ... affirming [its] possession of precision missiles". In reaction, however, Mr. Netanyahu asserted that the members of the diplomatic community were not brought to the actual underground production facility.

32. Hizbullah denied reports in the media on 19 August that it maintained detention and interrogation facilities, including in the southern suburbs of Beirut and the Biqa'.

33. From 1 June to 20 September, 39 terrorism-related arrests by the Lebanese Armed Forces and security services were reported, including of suspected affiliates of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Jabhat Fath al-Sham (formerly the Nusrah Front). On 1 August, eight Lebanese nationals suspected of having previously fought with ISIL in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq were referred to the judiciary on terrorism-related charges. On 25 June, two Lebanese fugitives were arrested by the Lebanese Armed Forces in Baalbek, reportedly for instigating armed clashes. On 26 June, an Internal Security Forces agent was shot at in Yammunah, Biqa'. On 4 October, the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed in Baalbek following an exchange of fire between unidentified armed persons.

34. The security situation in the Palestine refugee camps was marked by several localized incidents. On 23 July, several persons were injured in the Burj Shamali camp in a personal dispute that escalated into shooting. Between 23 and 27 July, the Joint Palestinian Security Force apprehended several suspects following grenade attacks in the Rashidieh camp near Tyre. An individual apprehended by the group Ansar Allah in the Mieh camp near Sidon on suspicion of the attempted assassination of the group's leader, Jamal Sleiman, was later found hanged in the group's headquarters on 22 July. On 14 September, the Internal Security Forces apprehended an individual,

allegedly affiliated with Ansar Allah, in Sidon in connection with the attempted assassination of a Palestine Embassy official in 2017. On 15 October, clashes between Fatah and Ansar Allah reportedly left 2 persons dead and more than 20 injured. Further clashes on 25 October left a fighter dead and several others wounded, including two members of the Lebanese Armed Forces. A ceasefire that went into effect on 28 October involves the deployment of unarmed members of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine to monitor the agreement. The fighting resulted in the forced displacement of most residents from the camp, extensive damage and the suspension of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) operations.

35. In the Ein El Helweh camp near Sidon, the security situation escalated on 15 September when a person was shot dead by the son of a senior figure in the Bilal Badr extremist group. UNRWA schools were closed for a day. The Joint Palestinian Security Force in Ein El Helweh, the work of which was put on hold in July amid tensions between the Fatah and Hamas factions, was reactivated early in October. General tensions between Fatah and Hamas led the Amal Movement to broker a reconciliation on 2 August.

36. There was no progress in dismantling the military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada, which continue to compromise Lebanese sovereignty and impede the ability of the State to monitor and effectively control parts of the border.

D. Arms embargo and border control

37. Allegations of arms transfers to non-State armed actors continued to be made and are of serious concern. While taking such allegations seriously, the United Nations is not in a position to substantiate them independently. Were the allegations to be proved correct, they would constitute a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). More information is provided in annex II to the present report.

38. Reports of engagement by Hizbullah in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic continued. As noted in my report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2018/920), on 19 September, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah reiterated that "we agree that the Government should dissociate itself, but political forces are not dissociating themselves", adding that "our presence there depends on the acceptance and need of the Syrian Government ... what is happening in the region determines the fate of the region and Lebanon". On 23 September, the President of Lebanon, Michel Aoun, reportedly stated that Hizbullah was "defending the lands" through its activities in the Syrian Arab Republic. A number of Lebanese nationals also allegedly continued to fight with anti-government armed groups in the Syrian Arab Republic.

39. As noted in that same report, in a letter dated 24 August addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/595), the Permanent Representative of Yemen referenced a reported meeting of the Secretary-General of Hizbullah with a delegation of Yemeni Houthis on 19 August. In the letter, he raised concern regarding Hizbullah's "transfer of advisers and military instructors to the Houthi coup" as posing a "serious regional and global threat" and asked the Council, through the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), to "investigate, within its mandate, [Hizbullah's] activities that pose a serious threat to Yemen and to take appropriate measures".

40. On 25 September, the parliament of Lebanon passed a law authorizing the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty. The Treaty is focused on enhancing the responsibility of Governments to prevent the illegal transfer and circulation of

weapons outside State control. Lebanon will be obligated to report annually on the implementation of the Treaty.

41. In the context of large-scale counter-terrorism and anti-trafficking operations, the Lebanese Armed Forces reinforced their positions along the border with the Syrian Arab Republic, deploying land border regiments and constructing watchtowers. On 14 August, the Lebanese Armed Forces Commander, General Joseph Aoun, chaired a meeting of the joint committee responsible for the United States of America and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Border Protection Assistance Programme at the Rayak Air Base Central Training Centre in the Biqa' to assess security along the eastern and northern borders of Lebanon.

42. Cross-border fire from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon further declined. Nevertheless, Lebanese Armed Forces data show that 1,006 Syrian nationals were apprehended during the reporting period for entering Lebanon illegally. The Lebanese authorities arrested 16 individuals in connection with human smuggling. In separate Lebanese Armed Forces operations, on 22 June, on the outskirts of Masna', an alleged smuggler was killed and another injured; on 27 September, on the outskirts of Suwayri, a Syrian national died and four others were injured; and, on 7 October, two persons were injured in Suwayri.

43. As part of efforts to tackle illicit cross-border trafficking networks in the Baalbek-Hirmil region, north Biqa', the Government of Lebanon bolstered security for the region, in line with its plan endorsed by the Higher Defence Council on 19 June. On 23 July, a prominent local drug dealer and eight affiliates were killed during a Lebanese Armed Forces raid in Baalbek, with 41 persons arrested. On 25 September, a Lebanese soldier was killed and six others were injured in a raid in Hirmil, while a fugitive was arrested. Subsequently, on 1 October, the Lebanese Armed Forces reportedly arrested 10 fugitives and confiscated weapons, ammunition and narcotics. The Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces conducted counter-terrorism operations in informal Syrian settlements, resulting in several arrests in and around Arsal and Akkar.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

44. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued mine clearance operations along the Blue Line and in areas south of the Litani River. During the reporting period, there were two victims of items of unexploded ordnance reported north of the Litani and one victim south of the Litani: a remnant of war in the form of a cluster bomb exploded near Hula (Sector East) on 23 September, seriously injuring a local resident. UNIFIL also observed bushfires exacerbated by the presence of mines in Yarun (Sector West), Blida, Mays al-Jabal and Hula (all Sector East), which triggered several uncontrolled explosions. On 16 July, the Lebanese Mine Action Centre initiated a non-technical survey along 120 million m2 of the north-eastern border to determine areas for clearance, with support from the Mines Advisory Group and Norwegian People's Aid. Several donors committed funds for clearance activities in line with the survey results.

45. Lebanon featured as an exemplary model for progress at the eighth meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in Geneva from 3 to 5 September 2018. Of the 50 billion Lebanese pounds ($33 million) pledged by the Government over the coming five years for cluster munitions clearance, 7.5 billion Lebanese pounds ($5 million) was allocated in the budget for 2018.

46. Six UNIFIL mine clearance teams and two explosive ordnance disposal teams cleared 11,439 m^2 of land and destroyed 347 anti-personnel mines, including an item of unexploded ordnance near a UNIFIL helipad in the Force's area of operations. Two

mortar grenades found at a UNIFIL position were stored pending their safe destruction.

47. The Mine Action Service of the United Nations conducted 58 quality assurance monitoring visits to the mission's demining teams to ensure safety and effectiveness in UNIFIL demining operations and delivered 13 safety and awareness briefings on landmines/explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, benefiting 292 United Nations military and civilian personnel.

F. Delineation of borders

48. No progress was made towards the delineation or demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian Arab Republic and Israel have yet to respond to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area proposed in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641).

49. The dispute between Lebanon and Israel over their exclusive economic zones remained unresolved. In a statement on 1 August, the President of Lebanon stated that "Israel's attempts will not prevent us from ... taking advantage of our oil wealth, as we will soon embark on the exploration phase". Exploration activities by the consortium of three international oil companies that were awarded licences by Lebanon in December 2017 proceeded.

G. Political and institutional stability

50. Since his nomination on 24 May, the Prime Minister-designate, Saad Hariri, has continued to lead consultations with all political stakeholders to form the new Government. On 3 September, he presented a proposal for the new Cabinet to the President. In a statement, the President said that he would continue his consultations with the Prime Minister-designate.

51. Pending the formation of the new Government, the Speaker, Nabih Berri, called for joint meetings of parliamentary committees on key legislation and, following consultations with the Prime Minister-designate, convened the parliament on 24 and 25 September. It, among other things, passed 16 laws, including 1 pertaining to the Arms Trade Treaty and others connected with the international conference in support of Lebanese development and reforms agenda on waste management, judicial mediation, oil and gas transparency, electronic transactions and personal data, and the whistle-blower protection law. Discussions are continuing on the establishment of a follow-up mechanism to the conference pursuant to the outcome communiqué of 6 April.

52. Subsequent to the parliamentary elections held on 6 May, the established electoral dispute resolution mechanism, the Constitutional Council, received 17 challenges, which are pending a decision. Meanwhile, on 17 July, the European Union election observation mission presented its final report, with recommendations on addressing gaps in regulations governing the financing of campaigns, unequal access to the media, the underrepresentation of women in the parliament and the capacity of the electoral supervisory committee. The mission highlighted improvements, including the new proportional system, out-of-country voting and increased voter secrecy.

53. Following the Rome II conference, several countries announced new financial contributions or credit lines to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces in line with their strategic plans. Nevertheless, the implementation of

those new commitments has slowed in the absence of a government to forge bilateral agreements and oversee the coordination of multilateral assistance. Existing bilateral support programmes continued and, on 26 June in Washington, D.C., the Lebanese Armed Forces Commander participated in the first meeting of the joint United States-Lebanese military cooperation body since 2008.

54. The national human rights institution is not yet operational, with no funding allocated by the parliament, and its members, appointed on 21 May, not sworn in by the President. Meanwhile, concerns regarding freedom of expression in Lebanon have grown. On 16 August, the head of the Lebanese Centre for Human Rights was summoned for questioning by the Cybercrime Bureau of the Internal Security Forces over a social media post. On 17 August, a consortium of non-governmental organizations wrote to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression to call for the condemnation of the continued summoning of activists by Lebanon. Subsequently, the Office of the High Commissioner wrote to the Director General of the Internal Security Forces, the Minister of Justice and the Prosecutor General to outline its concerns about restrictions on freedom of expression and practices that have reportedly accompanied the arrest of some activists and bloggers.

55. Between 11 and 21 September, closing arguments in *Prosecutor v. Ayyash et al.* were presented at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. After attending the opening of the final hearings on 11 September, the Prime Minister-designate, stressing the stability and security of Lebanon, pledged to deal with the verdict of the trial "as a responsible official who has the responsibility to protect the country and the Lebanese people".

56. As at 30 September, 971,667 refugees and asylum seekers had been registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Lebanon, comprising 952,562 Syrian refugees and 19,105 refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities. New registrations of Syrian refugees by UNHCR have been suspended by the Government since 2015. A decrease in the number of registered Syrian refugees was due mainly to natural deaths, onward movements, resettlement and spontaneous returns to the Syrian Arab Republic.

57. Individual spontaneous returns of Syrian refugees have continued, with 3,430 individuals returning between January and September 2018. Another 3,600 individuals returned during the same period in group movements, facilitated by the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security in coordination with the Syrian authorities. While UNHCR was not involved in organizing those returns, it coordinated with the General Directorate and was present at each departure point. UNHCR provided support to returning refugees in obtaining their civil documentation and education certificates and other issues critical for their re-establishment in the Syrian Arab Republic.

58. On 26 July in Beirut, a high-level Russian diplomatic and military delegation met Lebanese officials, including the President, the Prime Minister-designate and the Speaker, to discuss a Russian initiative regarding the return of Syrian refugees. The formation of a Lebanese-Russian coordination committee was then announced in September.

59. It is indicated in the forthcoming vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon for 2018 that 68 per cent of refugees live below the national poverty line of $3.84 per day and 51 per cent below the extreme poverty line. Only 27 per cent of Syrian refugees have legal residency, despite the adoption of circulars in 2017 to waive fees and ease the process, in line with the Lebanon partnership paper of the Brussels II conference, held in April.

60. As at 30 June, the humanitarian resources available for Lebanon in 2018 amounted to $1.26 billion, including $596 million disbursed by donors and $267 million committed for 2018, in addition to funds carried over from 2017. Reported figures continue to show a lack of visibility regarding funding available beyond 2018, with only $250 million reported as commitments for Lebanon, restricting partners' ability to plan for more sustainable solutions to critical humanitarian and stabilization needs.

61. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan was 34 per cent funded as at 30 June, at $918 million, including $327 million carried over from 2017. The continued high-level donor support to Lebanon notwithstanding, the shortfall in funding resulted in immediate gaps in the health, water and sanitation, shelter and winter assistance programme areas for refugees and host communities.

62. Uncertainty over the financial situation of UNRWA and the Agency's ability to continue to provide essential services, such as health care and education, led to peaceful sit-ins, protests and demonstrations. UNRWA schools in Lebanon opened on 1 September, enabling some 37,000 pupils at 65 schools to continue their studies. On the margins of the opening week of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, I participated in a ministerial meeting, co-chaired by Germany, Japan, Jordan, Sweden, Turkey and the European Union, on 27 September, to underline the importance of UNRWA for the well-being of Palestine refugees and stability in the region. The meeting raised an additional $122 million in new pledges for the Agency.

63. Lebanon presented its first voluntary national review at the ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development on 18 July. Its report provided an overview of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In his presentation, the Deputy Prime Minister, Ghassan Hasbani, highlighted the challenges facing Lebanon, namely the lack of data, the need to increase the institutional capacity of the public sector and the need for a development agenda.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

64. UNIFIL continually reviewed its security plans and risk mitigation measures, in particular following security threat warnings, and closely coordinated them with the Lebanese authorities. Security exercises were conducted to test the readiness of civilian and military personnel in the event of evacuation during a crisis. In the Arqub area (Sector East), strict security measures have remained in place, including the use of armed escorts, for official movements by United Nations personnel.

65. UNIFIL continued to monitor ongoing proceedings in Lebanese military courts against individuals suspected of planning or perpetrating serious attacks against the Force. The Permanent Military Court held hearings on 10 April regarding the attack against UNIFIL peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent in 2007 and in the case of terror intent opened in January 2014. The next hearings for both cases are scheduled for 17 December. In the case of the attempted serious attack against UNIFIL in 2008, in which one of the four convicted perpetrators filed an appeal, the next hearing is scheduled for 6 November. Three investigations launched into the serious attacks perpetrated against UNIFIL on 27 May, 26 July and 9 December 2011 are continuing, pursuant to additional judicial instructions issued by the investigating judge. In the case of the homicides committed in 1980, when two UNIFIL peacekeepers from Ireland were shot dead and one was injured, the Permanent Military Court reopened the trial proceedings and held a hearing on 22 October 2018. The next hearing is scheduled for 14 December. UNIFIL also followed up with the Lebanese Armed Forces on the incident of 4 August in Majdal Zun (see para. 16).

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

66. As at 24 October, UNIFIL comprised 10,519 military personnel, including 530 women (5 per cent), from 41 troop-contributing countries; 233 international staff, including 76 women (33 per cent); and 580 national civilian staff, including 155 women (27 per cent). The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force comprised six vessels, two helicopters and 773 of the Force's total military personnel, including 30 women (4 per cent). In addition, 55 military observers, including 7 women (13 per cent), from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization serve with Observer Group Lebanon, under the operational control of UNIFIL.

V. Conduct and discipline

67. During the reporting period, neither UNIFIL nor the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon received allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse. They continued to implement and enhance measures to prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. UNIFIL conducted seven assessment visits to sectors in its area of operations to assess changes in the risk environment and brief military commanders on their accountability in respect of conduct and discipline matters. The United Nations country team's prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse network in Lebanon continued to inform local communities of expected standards of conduct for United Nations personnel and how to report misconduct. UNIFIL and the Office continued to promote a productive, harmonious and inclusive working environment, with emphasis on protection against sexual harassment and other forms of prohibited conduct.

VI. Observations

68. In support of the country's stability, I call upon the political leaders and all political parties in Lebanon to accelerate their efforts to form an inclusive government. The momentum towards renewed institutional governance set in motion by the parliamentary elections must be sustained for Lebanon to benefit fully from the road map of international support laid out at the conferences held in Rome, Paris and Brussels. It is time to set aside differences, intensify dialogue and put the national interest above partisan politics. A spirit of compromise is required to find common ground, avert the risk of renewed institutional paralysis and swiftly form a government that preserves the balance enshrined in the Taif Accords of 1989 and the Constitution.

69. I also call upon the future authorities to pursue the Lebanese policy of disassociation, consistent with the Baabda Declaration of 2012), and for all Lebanese parties and nationals to cease their involvement in the Syrian conflict and other conflicts in the region. The alleged movement of fighters and war materiel across the Lebanese-Syrian border violates resolution 1701 (2006).

70. The repeatedly self-acknowledged maintenance of unauthorized weapons outside State control by Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006), is deeply troubling and poses a dangerous threat to the stability of Lebanon and the region. Allegations of illegal arms transfers to non-State armed groups in Lebanon also continue to be made, warranting serious concern. The United Nations is not in a position to verify these reports independently. Nevertheless, if they are substantiated, the transfers would constitute a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The Lebanese steps towards enhanced regulation of international arms

transfers and trade are welcome. In that connection, I call upon Member States to uphold their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006) to prevent the sale or supply of arms or related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon other than those authorized by the Government.

71. Furthermore, I call upon the Government to take all action necessary to ensure the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State, in line with the Cabinet decision of 27 July 2006 and earlier decisions of the national dialogue.

72. Continued commitment by all sides to resolution 1701 (2006) remains essential for the stability of Lebanon and the region. The prevailing lack of fulfilment of the resolution by Israel and Lebanon and their continued violations are concerning. Non-compliance increases the risk of tensions and possible escalation into hostilities. I urge both parties to redouble their efforts towards full adherence to the resolution, to consolidate the period of calm of the past years and move decisively towards a permanent ceasefire, as enshrined in the resolution. The United Nations remains ready to support the parties in that regard. The Organization will continue to support efforts to defuse tensions through dialogue, to pursue opportunities for confidence-building and to create an environment conducive to resolving underlying grievances, including through the continued good offices of my Acting Special Coordinator and UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander.

73. I strongly condemn the attack of 4 August on United Nations peacekeepers in Majdal Zun and call upon the Lebanese Armed Forces to complete the investigation and upon the Government to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable. There was clear intent by some individuals involved to harm the peacekeepers. It is fortunate that the incidents did not result in major injuries. The freedom of movement of UNIFIL in its entire area of operations, including along the full length of the Blue Line, is critical. The Lebanese authorities must fulfil their responsibility to ensure the safety and unimpeded freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel.

74. The continued relative calm that has prevailed along the Blue Line since 2006 is a welcome development. Citizens of both Lebanon and Israel have enjoyed its dividends. It must not be taken for granted, however. In the absence of a permanent ceasefire, incidents continue to have the potential to escalate swiftly. All stakeholders must take responsibility and refrain from language and unilateral action that could increase mistrust and cause the situation to escalate. The constructive engagement of the parties in the tripartite forum, including on efforts to address disputes relating to specific areas along the Blue Line, is commendable. I remain concerned, however, that the absence of an agreement on disputed areas could lead to increased tensions in the light of the continuing Israel Defense Forces works south of the Blue Line. I reiterate my call upon both parties to continue to avail themselves of the UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements to the fullest extent possible, and to make further efforts to identify a way forward to resolve existing points of contention.

75. Israeli overflights of Lebanese territory are a near daily occurrence and reported to span almost the entirety of the country. This constitutes a violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. The Israel Defense Forces also continue to occupy northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line in a long-standing violation of the resolution. I reiterate my condemnation of all violations of Lebanese sovereignty and my call for Israel to cease its violations of Lebanese airspace and to withdraw its forces from northern Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line.

76. The dispute over the maritime exclusive economic zones of Lebanon and Israel remains a flashpoint for tension and mistrust. I encourage the parties to explore

avenues to reduce tensions, which will create conditions conducive to dialogue and for an eventual solution. The United Nations stands ready to support the parties in such efforts.

77. Strengthening Lebanese State institutions remains central to ensuring stability. The United Nations will continue to support Lebanon in that regard, in particular to build the capacity of its security institutions as the sole defenders of the country's sovereignty. In follow-up to the Rome II conference, I encourage Member States to continue to implement existing commitments of support to the Lebanese Armed Forces and security institutions, drawing on their respective strategic plans, including in the context of the strategic dialogue mechanism.

78. The progress achieved in the preparations for a model regiment is welcome. I call upon the Government to step up its efforts to make the regiment operational, with continued support from UNIFIL and the international commu..ity. Furthermore, I urge the Government to prioritize efforts to increase the capability of the Navy. UNIFIL and my Acting Special Coordinator will continue to support its efforts in that regard.

79. Moving forward with the President's commitment to convening a national dialogue towards a national defence strategy is key to strengthening the ability of Lebanon to exercise effective State authority. Such a process should be Lebanese-owned and Lebanese-led, inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable, and in line with the country's international obligations. Earlier decisions of the national dialogue pertaining to the disarmament of non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada should be implemented.

80. The active engagement of the parliament under the leadership of its Speaker to advance the legislative agenda, including in connection with the commitments forged at the international conference in support of Lebanese development and reforms, held in April, is welcome. Amid the economic challenges facing the country, the reform agenda agreed upon at that conference has never been more relevant.

81. Women remain underrepresented in Lebanese political life. I reiterate my call for political actors to adopt measures to increase the meaningful participation and representation of women at all decision-making levels, also as part of implementing resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

82. I appeal to the President to swear in the members of the national human rights institution so that it, including its related mechanism aimed at preventing torture, becomes operational, and call upon the parliament to ensure that the institution has adequate resources to function effectively and independently.

83. Lebanon continues to exercise generosity and hospitality in temporarily hosting Syrian refugees. The United Nations will seek to strengthen the spirit of partnership with all actors, in line with international standards, including the principle of non-refoulement, to ensure the protection and dignity of the refugees while in Lebanon, as well as their ability to take individual free and informed decisions regarding their voluntary return.

84. All Palestinian factions must refrain from actions that endanger communities in Lebanon. Noting the continued serious financial challenges faced by UNRWA, I express gratitude to those Member States and regional organizations that made new pledges or increased their existing support at the ministerial meeting on 27 September.

85. As the proceedings of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon move towards a verdict, I applaud the commitment of the Prime Minister-designate on 11 September to dealing with the verdict responsibly. I look forward to the continued cooperation of the

Government with the Special Tribunal and call upon all parties concerned to respect the judicial process.

86. Noting the request of the Security Council in paragraph 12 of its resolution 2433 (2018) with regard to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of UNIFIL and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, I will respond with my recommendations to the Council by 31 December.

87. The United Nations remains grateful to all countries contributing military personnel and equipment to UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon. I commend the Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Pernille Dahler Kardel, welcome the arrival of the Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL, Major General Stefano Del Col, and pay tribute to Major-General Michael Beary, who completed his term in August. I encourage troop-contributing countries to increase the number of women among military personnel in UNIFIL. Lastly, I thank the civilian and military personnel of UNIFIL, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the United Nations country team for their continued efforts and dedication.

Annex I

Restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon from 5 July to 24 October 2018

1. On 9 July, a man in civilian clothes approached a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) patrol near a mosque in Tiri (Sector West) and gestured to it to leave the area. Following a discussion with the individual, the patrol proceeded using an alternative route. It was briefly followed by the man and two other individuals in civilian clothes on mopeds; the Lebanese Armed Forces were informed. Following the incident, UNIFIL conducted several patrols at the location without incident until 4 September (see para. 14).

2. On 13 July, two individuals in civilian clothes with two vehicles stopped a UNIFIL patrol in Hallusiyat al-Fawqa (Sector West), stating that the patrol could not proceed without the Lebanese Armed Forces. The patrol requested a Lebanese Armed Forces patrol to accompany it. As the Lebanese Armed Forces were unable to deploy support on short notice, the patrol proceeded using an alternative route. On 16 July, UNIFIL raised the incident with the Mayor of Hallusiyat al-Fawqa, who stated that that was the second time in 20 days that UNIFIL had patrolled in agricultural areas close to private farms and that, owing to the prevailing mistrust of UNIFIL in the area, it was important for the patrols to be conducted in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces.

3. On 13 July, four individuals in civilian clothes with motorbikes blocked the path of a UNIFIL patrol in the vicinity of Ayta al-Sha'b (Sector West). They opened the patrol car's door and attempted, unsuccessfully, to take the radio. The intervention of the Lebanese Armed Forces was requested. No damage or injuries were reported.

4. On 14 July, Lebanese soldiers stopped a UNIFIL patrol near a checkpoint north-east of Udaysah (Sector East). The Lebanese Armed Forces later stated that they had stopped the patrol for safety reasons, given that the road ahead was impassable for vehicles.

5. On 24 July, a barrier across the road leading to a Green without Borders site in Aytarun (Sector West) prevented a UNIFIL patrol, conducted in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, from patrolling the area. The patrol continued on an alternative route to complete its activity.

6. On 26 July, a barrier across the road leading to a Green without Borders site in Aytarun (Sector West) prevented a UNIFIL patrol, conducted in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, from patrolling the area. The patrol used an alternative route to complete its activity.

7. On 3 August, a UNIFIL patrol conducted in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces was unable to pass a locked gate south of Aytarun (Sector West). The patrol took an alternative route to complete its activity.

8. As mentioned in the main report, on 4 August, some 20 individuals in civilian clothes stopped a four-vehicle UNIFIL patrol in the village of Majdal Zun (Sector West).

9. On 10 August, a UNIFIL patrol in Blida (Sector West) was stopped by an individual in civilian clothes, who gestured with a pistol, pointed towards the ground throughout, to the patrol not to proceed further. UNIFIL requested the Lebanese Armed Forces to intervene. After 90 minutes, the patrol leader decided to take an alternative route to complete the patrol. The Lebanese Armed Forces later informed UNIFIL that the individual was a municipal police officer and that the patrol had been stopped because it had been about to enter private property.

10. On 22 August, the Lebanese Armed Forces stopped a UNIFIL patrol in Udaysah (Sector East), telling it that the road ahead was blocked and that it could not proceed. The patrol continued its assignment on an alternative route. Later that day, UNIFIL received information from the Lebanese Armed Forces suggesting that the patrol had been stopped because it had been about to enter an area restricted by the Lebanese Armed Forces. UNIFIL has since patrolled the location without incident.

11. On 24 August, a UNIFIL foot patrol conducted in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces was stopped by an individual in civilian clothes who shouted at the patrol that he was the Deputy Mayor of Dibbin (Sector East) and that it had to halt its activity to avoid "serious problems". Some 15 minutes later, reinforcements in the form of 20 Lebanese soldiers arrived, whereupon the individual left. The patrol completed its activity without further incident.

12. On 29 August, a civilian vehicle and a motorbike blocked the path of an Observer Group Lebanon patrol in Kfar Kila (Sector East). A group of individuals in civilian clothes subsequently approached the patrol. After a brief discussion, they agreed to allow it to continue its activity. UNIFIL has since patrolled the location without incident.

13. On 29 August, UNIFIL observed an individual in civilian clothes photographing a United Nations position in Balat (Sector East) using his mobile phone. When the patrol approached him, he blocked the road with his car and claimed that he was the Mayor of Balat and that the patrol could not enter Balat without being accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. Shortly thereafter, a second man approached the patrol, whereupon the first left the area. The second man introduced himself as a police officer (albeit without presenting an identification card) and told the patrol to ignore the first individual as he was not the Mayor. The patrol then continued its scheduled activity.

14. On 4 September, a UNIFIL patrol sent to investigate gunshots in the vicinity of Tiri (Sector West) was blocked by a civilian vehicle and a motorbike. One of the individuals blocking the road was verbally abusive towards the patrol. As the Lebanese Armed Forces were unable to deploy support on short notice, the patrol returned to its base without completing its planned activity. Following the incident, UNIFIL conducted several patrols at the location without incident until 10 October (see para. 16).

15. On 15 September, a UNIFIL patrol was stopped by five individuals in civilian clothes in Kunin (Sector West). About 30 locals gathered around the patrol and calmly explained that they did not want UNIFIL to patrol the village during prayer time without being accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. Shortly thereafter, the Lebanese Armed Forces arrived and escorted the patrol out of the village, whereupon it resumed its activity. The same day, a second patrol was stopped by about 10 locals in the same village on the road leading to the mosque. An off-duty Lebanese soldier in civilian clothes intervened and calmed down the somewhat agitated crowd and assisted the patrol in leaving the village. Shortly thereafter, UNIFIL met the Mayor of Kunin, who gave assurances that patrols were welcome in the area, but that it would be preferable if they used the main road instead of the narrow road next to the mosque. UNIFIL resumed patrols thereafter. The incidents took place during the period of religious commemoration of Ashura'. UNIFIL usually patrols the location without incident.

16. On 10 October, an Observer Group Lebanon patrol vehicle was stopped by two young people in civilian clothes in Tiri (Sector West) who told the patrol that it was not allowed to enter the village unless accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces and that it should leave immediately. On 12 and 13 October, UNIFIL followed up with the Mayor of Tiri, who said that he did not know who the youths were but

underlined that he had not authorized anyone to speak on his behalf. In a meeting with the Lebanese Armed Forces South Litani Sector on 15 October, the Lebanese Armed Forces emphasized that local residents had no objection to UNIFIL patrolling the village; however, they had requested UNIFIL to use the main road through the village and to avoid using the narrow streets in the centre owing to the size of the vehicles.

Annex II

Implementation of the arms embargo

1. In paragraph 18 of its resolution 2433 (2018), the Security Council recalled paragraph 15 of its resolution 1701 (2006), according to which all States were to take the measures necessary to prevent, by their nationals or from their territories or using flag vessels or aircraft, the sale or supply of arms and related materiel to any entity or individual in Lebanon other than those authorized by the Government or the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and requested the Secretary-General to include in his reporting to the Council an annex on the implementation of the arms embargo. The Council did not stipulate a United Nations role for monitoring and verifying the implementation of the embargo. UNIFIL, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the Secretariat have limited authority and capacity in that regard. The United Nations, however, remains committed to supporting overall compliance by the parties with resolution 1701 (2006) in all its provisions and advancing its implementation. Going forward, the United Nations will continue to engage with Member States on allegations of weapons transfers and efforts to address those allegations and other violations of the resolution.

2. With regard to control of the land border, in 2007, at the invitation of the Security Council, and in close liaison with the Government, the Secretary-General dispatched an independent border assessment team to assess the monitoring of the border with the Syrian Arab Republic and to report back to the Council. Recommendations from the missions in 2007 and 2008 have been progressively implemented by the Government. An integrated border management strategy for Lebanon, funded by the European Union, was subsequently launched in 2012, finalized in 2014 and sent to the Cabinet for adoption. The strategy's ongoing implementation is aimed at improving the ability of Lebanon to secure its border in accordance with national and international integrated border management standards and increasing the effectiveness of the border management-related security agencies.

3. The Lebanese Armed Forces-led Border Control Committee, a working-level inter-agency body that includes key donors, continues to implement technical cooperation programmes aimed at enhancing Lebanese capacity to control and facilitate the movement of people and goods across the borders. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon supports the Committee in promoting the complementarity and impact of border-related United Nations activities.

4. The lack of delineation in some areas of the border with the Syrian Arab Republic notwithstanding, the authority of the Government of Lebanon has been extended and border control enhanced as the Lebanese Armed Forces reinforced positions along the eastern border. Four land border regiments are deployed along the north-eastern border, with the support of Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Using watchtowers and forward operating bases, the regiments were instrumental in counter-terrorism operations in mid-2017. Regiment troops are being trained at the expanded Rayak Training Centre with the support of the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States.

5. Legislative steps were also taken to prevent illicit weapons transfers, with parliamentary adoption on 25 September of a law authorizing the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty. Lebanon will be obligated to report annually on the implementation of the Treaty, which is focused on the responsibility of Governments in exercising oversight to prevent the illegal transfer and circulation of weapons outside State control. The United Nations stands ready to support the Government in

the implementation of the Treaty, including any steps that it may deem necessary to adjust its legal framework and oversight system.

6. Further government efforts aimed at controlling the unauthorized transfer of arms or related materiel include the arrests of alleged weapons dealers in Arsal, Hirmil and Baalbek on at least four occasions during the reporting period. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida affiliates have been reported as recipients of illegal arms transfers. On 17 July, in Arsal, the Lebanese Armed Forces raided the residence of a Lebanese national over alleged links to a terrorist organization and confiscated weapons, computers, communication devices, surveillance cameras and army equipment found in his possession. Also in Arsal, on 22 July, a Lebanese Armed Forces patrol located five explosive belts. On 14 August, a wanted Lebanese national was arrested and weapons and ammunition were confiscated by the Lebanese Armed Forces in a raid in Buda'i, Baalbek, east Lebanon. On 28 August, in a raid conducted in the Hirmil area, the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested wanted individuals and confiscated weapons and ammunition. On 1 October, the Lebanese Armed Forces conducted large-scale raids using helicopters to locate fugitives on the outskirts of Hirmil. At least 10 fugitives were reportedly arrested, and weapons, ammunition and large quantities of illegal narcotics were seized.

7. Further to section II.D of the main report, some Member States have expressed concern over the alleged use of commercial air transport by foreign countries to illegally transfer weapons into Lebanon. In November 2016, Israel alleged air shipment of weapons from the Islamic Republic of Iran using commercial flights to Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport. The Lebanese authorities denied the allegations. The Islamic Republic of Iran also denied the allegations at the time (see S/2016/992). The United Nations is not in a position to substantiate the allegations. In a letter dated 25 October addressed to the Secretariat, a Member State provided information based on open-source reports that allege that, "since 2006, Iran has provided Hizbullah with surface-to-air missiles, surface-to-surface missiles, anti-ship cruise missiles, unmanned aircraft systems, light vehicles, and various small arms" by land and air routes. The Secretariat is not in a position to verify the allegations.

8. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force assists the Lebanese authorities in securing the country's maritime borders and entry points to help to prevent the unauthorized entry of arms or related materiel by sea into Lebanon, in accordance with paragraph 14 of resolution 1701 (2006). It monitors the maritime border and entry points, inter alia by carrying out maritime interdiction operations in support of the Lebanese Navy. Since the inception of the Task Force in October 2006, its vessels have conducted more than 89,500 hailing procedures, leading to some 12,000 inspections by the Navy and Customs Administration. The activities contributed to the detection of a smuggling attempt on 27 April 2012 (see S/2012/502).

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Report of the Security Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 5–7 October 2018

I. Introduction

1. In a letter dated 23 August 2018, the President of the Security Council informed the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that it had decided to send a mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 5 to 7 October 2018. The terms of reference of the mission are contained in the annex to document S/2018/890. The mission was co-led by representatives of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Equatorial Guinea and France and comprised the following members:

- Verónica Cordova Soria (Deputy Permanent Representative), Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
- Wu Haitao (Deputy Permanent Representative), China
- Gbolié Désiré Wulfran Ipo (Deputy Permanent Representative), Côte d'Ivoire
- Job Obiang Esono Mbengono (Deputy Permanent Representative), Equatorial Guinea
- Mahlet Hailu Guadey (Deputy Permanent Representative), Ethiopia
- François Delattre (Permanent Representative), France
- Kanat Tumysh (Deputy Permanent Representative), Kazakhstan
- Mansour Ayyad Alotaibi (Permanent Representative), Kuwait
- Karel Jan Gustaaf van Oosterom (Permanent Representative), Netherlands
- Francisco Tenya (Deputy Permanent Representative), Peru
- Joanna Wronecka (Permanent Representative), Poland
- Dmitry Polyanskiy (Deputy Permanent Representative), Russian Federation
- Olof Skoog (Permanent Representative), Sweden
- Stephen Hickey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Austin M. Smith, United States of America

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II. Visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Meetings in Kinshasa

A. Meeting with the Independent National Electoral Commission

2. The President of the Independent National Electoral Commission provided an overview of the activities conducted by the Commission in the past years and confirmed that both the electoral calendar and the legal framework were in place for holding the presidential, national and provincial legislative elections on 23 December, as scheduled.

3. Council members welcomed the commitment of the Government to holding elections as scheduled and acknowledged the challenges of organizing elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They stressed that the aim of their visit was to support the electoral process in full respect for the sovereignty of the country. They welcomed progress made to date and noted the decision of the Government to take full responsibility for organizing and funding the elections. They reiterated the need for a credible and inclusive process and encouraged the Independent National Electoral Commission to maintain dialogue with all parties with a view to addressing remaining contentious issues in a constructive manner. Referring to the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Council members reiterated the Mission's availability to provide the Commission with technical and logistical support, should the Commission wish to make use of that support, and asked whether the Commission could share their technical and logistical plans to allow MONUSCO to provide appropriate support, if and where needed.

4. The President of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Mr. Nangaa, insisted on the historic nature of the forthcoming elections as, for the first time, there would be a peaceful transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He expressed the view that insecurity, which prevailed in some areas, would not prevent the elections from taking place on 23 December. He argued that all steps had been taken to ensure a successful conclusion of the electoral process and he recognized that two contentious issues remained, namely, the voter registry and the use of voting machines. While acknowledging that the registry was "not perfect", the President stressed that the Commission had addressed the issue of voters who had registered more than once and that the controversy over some 6 million voters registered without fingerprints should not be considered as a real problem, as both the voter cards and the voter lists included pictures of the voters. He explained that the Commission had chosen to use voting machines rather than ballot papers because the former were cost-efficient, reliable and the best option to hold presidential, national and provincial legislative elections on the same day. The President clarified that the use of voting machines could not be assimilated to an electronic vote but rather to a form of ballot printing. He confirmed that counting, which would take place in the presence of observers, would be done manually, and he underlined the critical role of national observers in lending credibility to the process. He expressed appreciation for the report on voting machines issued by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and stated that most of the recommendations therein were already being implemented. The President welcomed technical assistance from MONUSCO and added that the Commission would not see any inconvenience in the provision of logistical assistance by the Mission. He explained that the Commission had recently requested assistance from MONUSCO with a sensitization campaign, as well as with capacity-building and the training of electoral agents stationed at the polling sites.

B. Meeting with the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

5. Council members met President Joseph Kabila Kabange in the presidential palace, in Kinshasa. They welcomed the progress made, in particular the decision of the President to turn a page in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a view to ensuring the first peaceful transition of power and stressed the importance of holding free, fair, credible and transparent elections for the future stability of the country. Council members also assured President Kabila of their respect for the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They underscored the need to create consensus around the electoral process, the importance of international observation and the need for political space and freedom of expression.

6. President Kabila noted that, the last time that he had met the Security Council, in 2016, he had expressed the hope that, at their following encounter, they would discuss development-related issues rather than elections. He also recalled the first time that he had addressed the Council, when his country was still invaded and only a few military observers were deployed. Seventeen years later, his country was now ready to take on the responsibility to deal with armed groups and organize elections. He stated that his country had received plenty of international advice over the past years and that, given their experience since the independence, it would now be time to listen to Africa and its statesmen.

7. President Kabila underscored that elections were an internal affair. In the light of past elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he expressed more concern about what happened after the elections — stability, the development of the country and the consolidation of the democratic process — than the elections themselves. He reiterated his decision to organize the elections without international support "as a matter of principle". The Democratic Republic of the Congo had received assistance from many different partners, which, rather than providing help, had created what he described as "havoc". He stated that, since the Democratic Republic of the Congo had taken this decision, the electoral process had been running smoothly and that the elections would take place on 23 December. He added that they would be free, fair and transparent, which was what the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo deserved. Should the Democratic Republic of the Congo need any assistance, the Government would make it known. In responding to questions and comments, President Kabila mentioned that there was not much that the Government could do to address the lack of trust in the electoral process, including the use of voting machines, as people would always be afraid of technical innovation, noting that, even within the presidential majority, there were individuals who had doubts about the technology. With regard to political space, the President said that political rallies would be allowed, provided that they were peaceful. He expressed the view that the issue of freedom of expression should not be raised in a country with such a variety of media outlets as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

C. Meeting with the Prime Minister and the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Security

8. The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister and attended by the Head of the National Intelligence Agency, the Deputy Chief General of the National Police, the Diplomatic Adviser to the President, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations and representatives of the military intelligence service.

9. Security Council members reaffirmed their respect for the independence and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and underscored the historic nature of the forthcoming elections as the first peaceful transfer of power in the country. They stressed the importance of credible, transparent and peaceful elections, which would contribute to peace and stability in the country, the region and beyond. Council members insisted on the need to reach a consensus over contentious issues, such as the use of voting machines and the voter registry. They also advocated the full implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement, including the opening of the political space, respect for human rights, freedom of expression and the right to manifest. Council members acknowledged the various challenges faced by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and congratulated the Government on its effective response to the Ebola virus disease. They also welcomed progress made in ending the recruitment of child soldiers. Referring to the mandate of MONUSCO, Council members reiterated the availability of the Mission to provide logistical support, as appropriate. They also stressed the importance for the Mission, notably its force, to be fully equipped to implement its mandate with regard to the protection of civilians, and they called upon the Government to facilitate the entry of MONUSCO arms and ammunition into the Democratic Republic of the Congo to that effect.

10. The Government welcomed the Security Council's visit, noting that, since the deployment of the Mission, the Council had visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo almost every year. It added that the present visit was "extraordinary" in view of the forthcoming historic elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which would lead to the first peaceful transfer of power. The Government underlined challenges associated with organizing elections in a country with more than 40 million voters and expressed the view that the conditions for holding free and fair elections were in place. It reiterated its decision to fully assume the holding of the elections on 23 December and the importance of the international community's support for the process. The Government sought to justify the use of voting machines to address the challenges of organizing combined elections and reaffirmed the independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission. It also underlined progress made in the implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement. Regarding confidence-building measures, the Government stated that political actors convicted of crimes could not be considered as political actors and dismissed the excessive emphasis placed on the notion of inclusivity as unwarranted, saying that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had a tradition of dialogue and power-sharing.

11. The Government referred to the sometimes "unhappy cooperation" with MONUSCO, reproaching the Mission for violating fundamental principles, such as the sovereignty of the host country, and for not always operating within the limits of its mandate. It regretted the alleged interference of the Mission with public demonstrations, as well as its patrols, which were not systematically coordinated with the national authorities. The Government added that MONUSCO had played an important role over the past two decades, but that time had come for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fully assume its responsibilities, including on the security front. The Government suggested reviewing the collaboration with MONUSCO in the light of emerging threats, such as terrorism in the Beni area.

D. Meeting with the presidential majority (Front commun pour le Congo)

12. Security Council members reiterated their respect for the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and underscored that they were not interested in the outcomes of the elections but in the credibility of the process. They insisted on the need to resolve differences through dialogue and called for the implementation of

the 31 December 2016 political agreement, including through confidence-building measures. They expressed concern that conditions for credible elections were not yet in place and asked what steps the Government intended to take to address the situation in a timely manner. They also insisted on the need to sensitize the population.

13. Members of the Front commun pour le Congo confirmed their commitment to the vision of President Kabila to safeguarding peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They also confirmed the commitment of the Government to implementing the 31 December 2016 political agreement and ensuring that elections were held on 23 December. They insisted that elections were the only viable path out of the current crisis but stressed that the practical modalities of the elections were the prerogative of the Independent National Electoral Commission. They agreed with the Council members that the deployment of observers in all polling stations would contribute to enhancing the credibility of the elections. The Front commun pour le Congo urged the Security Council to use its influence to impress upon those who wanted to derail the elections or plunge the country into violence the need to desist from carrying out their scheme.

E. Meetings with members of the opposition

14. The meeting with the political opposition began with a minute of silence in memory of victims in the Beni area. Council members commended the opposition's engagement in the December elections. They asked the delegates of the opposition for their assessment of whether the conditions for credible elections had been met and whether the political opposition intended to agree on a single candidate.

15. The Union pour la nation congolaise spoke on behalf of the delegation, which comprised members of the Dynamique de l'opposition, the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, Nouvel Élan, Ensemble pour le changement, the Mouvement de libération du Congo and Synergie électorale notre Congo. The delegates of the opposition informed the Security Council members that they were ready for the elections of 23 December. They stressed, nevertheless, that conditions for inclusive, free and transparent elections were not currently met. They underlined how persistent insecurity prevented candidates from campaigning freely throughout the country. They added that the Independent National Electoral Commission was subservient to government authorities and that several issues risked undermining the electoral process, notably the use of voting machines and the voter registry. On many occasions, they denounced the disqualification of Jean-Pierre Bemba and Adolphe Muzito as candidates and regretted the decision to prevent Moïse Katumbi from entering the country to submit his candidacy. The delegates of the opposition also questioned whether the Government had the means to fully assume the logistic and cost of the elections, and the refusal of logistical support from MONUSCO.

16. The delegates of the opposition shared a memorandum with the Council's delegation, in which they had identified a number of steps aimed at ensuring the credibility of the process, namely, abandoning the project of using voting machines; cleaning the voter registry; allowing the participation of candidates excluded from the race for political reasons; implementing the confidence-building measures outlined in the 31 December 2016 political agreement; deploying international observers; allowing the provision of international financial, material and logistical support for the election; deploying a regional force to secure the electoral process; allowing the participation of MONUSCO in the entire electoral process; and restructuring the Independent National Electoral Commission, including by replacing the delegate from the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social. Those issues notwithstanding, the delegates confirmed that the opposition would not boycott the elections and that it would soon agree on a unique candidate with a single programme.

F. Meeting with female candidates

17. The Security Council delegation met with a group of 17 female candidates for the national and provincial legislative elections, including the only female presidential candidate.

18. The group, which comprised representatives from both opposition and presidential majority political parties and groupings, asked the Security Council and MONUSCO to work alongside the Government to reinforce the security of women during elections (candidates, voters and observers). The representatives stressed the importance of listening to female candidates, not only as candidates but also as women. They welcomed the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Dr. Mukwege, as a defender of women. They expressed concerns about ongoing reports of sexual and gender-based violence, notably in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and stressed that violence against women was not limited to physical violence, as women were consistently subject to discrimination and intimidation. They stated that women were faced with additional challenges in politics, whether with regard to campaigning in areas affected by conflict or to being given the space to participate in the political life. Highlighting the fact that only 12 per cent of candidates were women, they stressed that more remained to be done to support the participation of women in the political process.

19. Some participants also raised concerns about the credibility of the electoral process if the use of voting machines were to be pursued without a political consensus. Mirroring the political divide in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there were at times clear divergences in views between majority and opposition candidates, notably regarding the use of voting machines. The Security Council delegation underlined the importance of the engagement of women in the political process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and suggested that women advocate the implementation of the technical recommendations of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy regarding voting machines before the Independent National Electoral Commission. While most agreed that MONUSCO should remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo beyond the electoral process, some regretted that its presence had not prevented a rise in insecurity in the eastern part of the country or human rights violations.

G. Meeting with the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo

20. Council members lauded the critical role of the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo (Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, CENCO) as a facilitator of dialogue. They expressed concerns about the lack of consensus and pervasive politicization of the electoral process and inquired about post-electoral scenarios. They asked CENCO whether it would be ready to play yet another facilitating role and sought advice on the role that the Council could play to contribute to confidence-building and the holding of credible elections on 23 December.

21. CENCO highlighted positive recent developments, notably the fact that President Kabila was not seeking a third term, and the overall adherence to the electoral calendar. It also welcomed the holding of a demonstration by the opposition, which had taken place without incident on 29 September. CENCO advised the Security Council to continue to advocate the confidence-building measures laid out in the 31 December 2016 political agreement, the facilitation of equal access to public media for all stakeholders and the lifting of all restrictions to the holding of peaceful demonstrations. It urged the Council to engage with the Independent National Electoral Commission to seek consensus on the use of voting machines or revert to

ballot papers, to clarify irregularities in the voter registry, including the removal of those registered without fingerprints, to invite international observers such as the African Union, the European Union, the Southern African Development Community and the Carter Center, and to cooperate closely with MONUSCO on the deployment of logistics and the transport of the electoral kits. CENCO also provided information on its activities to train and deploy some 40,000 observers, who included young people.

22. CENCO expressed concerns about continuing insecurity in Beni, Ituri, Tanganyika and Kasai compounded by the recent outbreak of Ebola, which would have an impact on the electoral process. It called for a joint MONUSCO-government plan to secure the national territory during the electoral process. While expressing concerns about the post-electoral situation, given current tensions and polarization, CENCO advised against a postponement of the elections, arguing that this would create additional challenges. It added that all must be done to ensure a peaceful transfer of power.

H. Meeting with representatives of civil society organizations

23. Council members met with a group of representatives of civil society organizations, including women rights groups, young people activist movements and human rights organizations, and asked for their views on the current political, security and humanitarian situation. Stressing the responsibility of the Government with regard to security and humanitarian matters, Council members asked how their visit could contribute to improving the current state of affairs.

24. While stressing the importance of the elections in leading to a successful transfer of power, representatives of civil society nonetheless questioned whether the elections in themselves would effectively improve the lives of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They stated that the population had little confidence in the process and limited hope in its outcome. They expressed concerns about the current polarization of positions, notably on the use of voting machines and the voter registry, which prevented the population from fully trusting the electoral process. They questioned what the Independent National Electoral Commission could do now that it had not been able to do in the past two years. Civil society organizations further warned that ill-organized elections could lead to large-scale violations of human rights and recommended that the Security Council take measures to end impunity, such as through the imposition of sanctions against political actors from both the ruling majority and the opposition. In conclusion, the civil society organizations assessed that holding elections within the current climate of mistrust and persisting divergences could exacerbate the prospect of chaotic elections. They said that Politicians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were not ready for holding elections on 23 December and that the United Nations must step in to ensure a credible process and secure the elections.

25. Representatives of civil society organizations based in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo denounced the continuing insecurity and expressed their frustration that the situation had not improved despite the presence of MONUSCO. They alerted Council members that young people were still being recruited by armed militias and that women continued to be sexually abused. The civil society organization based in Beni cited the ongoing massacre of the civilian population in Beni as illustrative of what they said were insufficient efforts by the United Nations. They called for the effective reinforcement of MONUSCO to protect civilians and prevent further insecurity, notably in the post-electoral period. They regretted the fact that the Intervention Brigade of the force had not met the expectation that it would neutralize armed groups effectively, and they suggested

reinforcing the MONUSCO community alert networks and for the Mission to develop joint plans with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to address the threats of armed groups and militias.

I. Briefing by the MONUSCO senior leadership and the United Nations country team

26. Throughout their visit, Council members were briefed by MONUSCO on its activities and the challenges to the implementation of its mandate, notably with regard to supporting the implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement and the protection of civilians. The Council members welcomed the good offices provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to diffuse tensions and promote confidence-building among all political stakeholders. They also welcomed the Mission's strategy for the comprehensive protection of civilians and the ongoing reconfiguration of the Mission. Council members also met the United Nations country team, which highlighted the considerable humanitarian and development challenges that would likely remain in the post-electoral context. The country team expressed the view that the development assistance formulation process provided an opportunity for the United Nations to identify ways to achieve the expected results and to develop concrete proposals for joint interventions in support of the nexus among humanitarian and development interventions, recovery and peacebuilding. According to the country team, the process also provided an opportunity to reflect on the transfer of responsibilities from MONUSCO to the Government and the country team. They suggested that the MONUSCO exit strategy be considered as a reconfiguration of the presence of the United Nations rather than a transfer of tasks.

J. Press conference

27. The visit ended with a press conference, during which the co-chairs of the mission shared with the press the conclusions that the Security Council had drawn from its mission.